

Bad Habits by LeighAnne_Balsdon

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Characters: Billy Hargrove, Carol Perkins, Claudia Henderson, Demo-Dogs (Stranger Things), Demogorgon (Stranger Things), Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Neil Hargrove, Original Female Character(s), Shadow Monster | Mind Flayer, Steve Harrington, The Party (Stranger Things), Tommy Hagan, Will Byers

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Original Female Character(s), Dustin Henderson/Original Female Character(s), Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair, Steve Harrington & Dustin Henderson, Steve Harrington/Original Female Character(s)

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Summary:

Hope Henderson has plenty of bad habits

Her worst one?

Billy Hargrove...

1. Hope

Summary for the Chapter:

Meet Hope Henderson, Dustin's older sister, she's a fun, loving, out going girl with some bad habits that she can't control.

Chapter 1 - Hope

The fall air was crisp when it hit Hope Henderson's face as she stepped out of the Arcade in Hawkins, Indiana after finishing her Sunday afternoon shift. She rummaged in her handbag for the box of cigarettes she needed desperately before heading home for the evening. She found the box but realized she had no lighter so she looked around the dark, empty street in hope of finding someone, anyone who could assist her with one but there was no one insight. She thought about going back inside to ask Keith – one of her colleagues – for one but she knew she would just get lectured again because she had supposedly quit two weeks ago.

As November was rolling around the corner, she needed the fix to keep her sane instead of her mind going back to last November where she was fighting that creature which Dustin – her younger brother – had called a Demogorgon. She would be back with Nancy Wheeler, Steve Harrington, and Jonathan Byers, in the Byers house waiting for the creature to fall out of thin air. The flickering lights, the screeching...

Hope was brought back to Earth when a blue Camaro screeched to a halt outside of the arcade and hooted. She looked at the scar on her arm from where the creature had scratched through her veins, she shuddered as the hairs stood up and the goosebumps started to show and pulled her sleeve down before looking up at the car in question. A guy of what looked to be about her age but more muscular than the usual fella at Hawkins high was sitting in the driver's seat, lighting a cigarette as he waited for whoever he was fetching who was obviously still inside the arcade. He looked over at Hope who thought it was now or never and Hope approached the window. "Look I'm not into that stuff okay darlin'?" He spoke, voice muffled

after blowing out the smoke he had just inhaled. Hope frowned realizing he was obviously mistaking her for some sort of escort and shook her head, "I need a light." She stated before pointing to the one in his lap. Once she got a better look at the guy, she noticed he had piercing blue eyes and a blond mop of hair on his head styled into a mullet. He had one earring dangling from his left ear, and he smelled of cologne and cigarette smoke. He smirked at her and the lighter lit up while he offered to light her cigarette for her. She put the cigarette between her lips and leaned forward. Once her cigarette was lit, she stood up straight and he eyed her out in a way that made Hope feel uncomfortable but also in a way that made Hope's butterflies in her stomach go wild. She cleared her throat and nodded in thanks before backing away to where she once stood and inhaled the smoke and blew it out. The guy, obviously a newbie in town, hooted again, and a younger red headed girl ran out of the arcade looking pleased with herself. "What took you so long?" He questioned fiercely as she opened the door. "I was trying to beat the high score on dig dug..." She responded whilst closing the door and the blue Camaro sped off into the night leaving Hope alone once again.

Hope got into her car, well actually her mothers car, they were sharing the car again because of Hope's most recent accident – reversing into Chief Hopper's truck after leaving the Byers' house on a Saturday afternoon spent with Will Byers, Jonathan's younger brother. They had both been for check-ups to see Doctor Owens at Hawkins Lab. They both had to see the doctor, Hope more for her scratch on her arm to see how it was healing. Will was seeing Doctor Owens because he had spent much more time in the place her brother and his friends deemed "the upside down" which was where the creature had come from. She turned into the Cul-de-sac where Nancy and Mike Wheeler lived because she remembered she needed to fetch her brother from their house. Once she had parked in the driveway she got out and knocked on the door and Mrs Wheeler opened it with a smile. "Hello Hope!" She greeted and let the older Henderson sibling into the house. Mrs Wheeler, who was just as beautiful as Nancy Wheeler, poked her head down the basement stairs and called for Dustin. "DUSTIN, YOUR SISTER IS HERE." "Nancy is upstairs if you'd like me to call her down?" Mrs Wheeler asked and Hope shook her head, "Mom's made dinner for us, we can't

be late.” She explained and Mrs Wheeler nodded and smiled kindly. There were loud footsteps up the stairs and Dustin Henderson appeared, he ruffled his brown curly hair with one hand and smiled at Mrs Wheeler, “Thanks Mrs Wheeler, I’ll see you next weekend!” Dustin chimed with a hint of a lisp, before ushering Hope outside. Mrs Wheeler waved to them and closed the door. “How did it go?” Hope asked Dustin who looked at her suspiciously. “Are you feeling okay?” Sarcasm seeping through his words. Hope rolled her eyes, a small chuckle escaping her mouth. “I’m just trying to make conversation.” She ended and Dustin nodded and launched into the story of their new campaign for dungeons and dragons. Once they had reached their house Claudia Henderson was waiting for them in the kitchen. She smiled at her two children, a bit worried about the older one but otherwise happy that they were both safe and healthy.

It was Monday morning and school was starting again after being closed for a short break. Hope rolled out of bed and stared at herself in the mirror after washing her face. Her green eyes stared back at her while she tried to brush and tame her longer dark brown curls which she and Dustin had inherited from their mother. She looked tired but otherwise okay. She concealed the circles under her eyes and put some mascara on. She was a pretty girl, nothing like Nancy Wheeler but pretty in her own way, sharp jawline, nice smile, cute button nose which she got from her father. She dug out a pair of leggings from her closet and tore through her tops and found a white one which covered her butt and threw it on, lastly she pulled on her black boots and grabbed a jersey before heading down for breakfast. “Eggs?” Her mom offered and Hope nodded. “Ready for school?” Her mom asked again and Hope nodded, again while shoving the eggs in her mouth. She knew that in a few seconds... HONK! She heard the horn of Jonathan Byers car go off and she gulped her orange juice down and rolled her eyes, right on time. “I have to go... thanks for breakfast... love you!” She called as she grabbed her school bag and slung it on her shoulder.

Once she was outside she jogged over to Jonathan’s car and got into it. “Morning!” He said to her and smiled, “How are we feeling today?” He asked as he reversed out of the driveway. “The same as every other day...” She responded and Jonathan nodded, “How’s Will

doing?" Hope asked, very much interested. "He's doing okay..." He responded and silence filled the car again. Hope dug into her bag and pulled out her cigarettes and lit one with the lighter she found in her room. She rolled her window down. Jonathan sighed, "I thought you were quitting..." He said and she frowned and chewed on her fingernail. "It helps and your mom and Chief Hopper smoke and you don't have a problem with that..." She pointed out and Jonathan went silent again. Cindy Lauper played through the speakers of Jonathan's car as they approached the high school. Jonathan saw Steve's BMW and parked next to it noticing that Nancy and Steve were still in the car, Nancy was reading something Steve had written on a piece of paper. Hope got out of Jonathan's car and tapped on the window of the Beemer and the two looked up and smiled. "I'll help you write your essay!" Nancy informed Steve as they got out of the car. "What essay?" Hope asked curiously and Steve showed her the piece of paper Nancy had given back to him. "For College!" He responded. Nancy linked her arm into Hope's arm and the two walked towards the high school. "How've you been?" Nancy asked kindly, "Alright I suppose, just been busy at work..." Hope responded but before she could continue there was some commotion towards the parking lot and Hope turned around and recognised the blue Camaro instantly. The guy she had seen at the arcade had gotten out of the car, smoking a cigarette, the red headed girl had gotten out too, but she was skateboarding towards the middle school where Dustin went. Carol and Tina who had been walking ahead of them with Steve's ex-best friend Tommy Hagan all turned around to stare. Carol and Tina giggled to each other. "Who is that?" Nancy asked, just as everybody started noticing the new guy. As he walked past them into the school wearing denim jeans and a denim jacket with combat boots he took one last drag of his cigarette, he looked at everyone looking at him and an annoyed expression took over his face until his eyes landed on Hope, he put his cigarette out, smirked at her and continued on into the school leaving them outside. How did he do that? Hope thought to herself as the butterflies soared around her stomach making her feel giddy.

2. Billy

Summary for the Chapter:

Hope and Billy cross paths again, Billy makes the first move, Hope doesn't know how to control her feelings

Chapter 2 – Billy

Hope slumped down in her chair waiting for the class to begin. English was one of Hope's favourite classes she just hated waiting for Mr Honey who was always late. In fact, she hated waiting in general. If she were able to be on time anyone else could be on time too. She jiggled her right leg impatiently, waiting for Mr Honey, eventually after what felt like a lifetime to Hope the door opened and Mr Honey walked in followed by the new guy. Hope felt herself sit upright and her jiggling leg stopped. "Everyone, we have a new student from California joining us today, his name is Billy Hargrove." Mr Honey introduced Billy to the class. "Anyone willing to show Mr Hargrove around?" Mr Honey asked and unfortunately for Hope, Tommy, and Carol, who were sitting at the back of the class, put their hands up. Hope rolled her eyes at how eager Tommy and Carol were and looked back up at Billy to see if he showed any emotion, but he did not. He just nodded and walked to the back of the class and took the open seat next to Tommy. Hope watched as he went to sit down, finally making eye contact with him again, just to see if the butterflies would start again and true as gold they did. She snapped her head back to the front and the butterflies stopped. She groaned to herself and realized from now on she was always going to be distracted in English class because of a boy and she hated herself for it and prayed to whoever was listening that she didn't have him in any other classes.

When the bell rang for the end of the lesson Hope rushed out of the class. She could feel his eyes burning into the back of her head the entirety of the class and she could not handle it anymore. She wondered if he could feel it too, the magnetic pull they seemed to have towards each other or was she just being a teenage girl with raging hormones? She found Nancy at their lockers and Nancy's eyes

widened and she chuckled when she saw Hope. "What is wrong with you?" Nancy asked, seeing Hope looking flustered. "I have no idea!" Hope cried out, her voice echoing as she stuck her head in her locker to avoid any contact with Billy as he walked past them. "Is this about the new guy?" Nancy queried and Hope sighed and removed her head from her locker to look at Nancy. "I think it's just because he's new, hopefully whatever is going on with me will pass." Hope said and Nancy nodded. Luckily, Billy was not in her next class or the few classes after that but when lunch period started, she saw him again. Her arm accidentally brushed his arm as she walked past him to get to Jonathan. His blue orbs met her green ones. She smiled at him, finally doing something other than staring. She saw a small smile appear on his face before he turned back to Tommy who was talking animatedly about something. "What was that?" Jonathan asked, seeing the small exchange between Hope and the new guy. "Nothing." Hope quickly said before they exited the cafeteria. Steve and Nancy were waiting for them. "That new guy is the worst!" Steve exclaimed. Nancy's gaze flickered over to Hope before she continued to listen to Steve. "He's so obnoxious!" Steve added. "I think it's Tommy, he's definitely saying things to him to get me riled up." Steve finished and looked at his three friends waiting for them to say something. Hope shrugged, "I haven't really spoken to him, so I don't know!" Nancy said honestly, and Steve groaned. While Steve was trying to convince Jonathan that they needed to be cooler somehow Hope lit a cigarette and had a pull on it. "You really need to stop smoking." Nancy told Hope, putting her nose up at the smell, "It's disgusting." Nancy added. Hope rolled her eyes but continued.

The next day Nancy and Hope were leaving their Math class when Tina Martin handed them a flyer to her Halloween party. "Hey, can I have another one of those?" Nancy asked Tina who nodded. "For Jonathan!" Nancy said to Hope, holding up the flyer. Hope read the leaflet, black letters stared back at her, "Tina's Halloween Bash, come and get sheet faced." Hope laughed, "What are you guys dressing up as for Halloween?" Hope asked Nancy, "We're going as Lana and Joel from Risky Business." Nancy responded "Ah, a couples costume of the ages." Hope said and giggled, and Nancy rolled her eyes but smiled, "What about you?" Nancy asked Hope who broke out into song "What a feeling, beings believing, I can have it all, now I'm dancing for my life." Hope went a bit off key towards the end, but Nancy

laughed anyway, "Let me guess, Alex Owens from flash dance?" Nancy must have guessed it correctly because Hope nodded. "All I want to know is who has a party during the week, do you think we'll get away with going?" Hope asked Nancy who nodded, "Just tell your mom you're staying over at me, you know my parents aren't always on the lookout for us so if we say we're going to the diner they'll believe us and Steve can drive us." Nancy ended, winking at Hope. Nancy was obviously pointing out to Hope that it was great to have a boyfriend who could drive. They walked the halls and bumped into Jonathan. "We're going!" Nancy insisted, slapping the invitation into Jonathan's chest. Jonathan grabbed the invitation before it fell to the floor and read it. "I can't go, I've already got plans." He stated. "You've got to live a little J! Come on, it could be fun." Hope said with a smile too big for her face, "Are you being sarcastic?" Jonathan asked and Hope laughed. "Something Nancy would probably say." Hope imagined out loud, looking over at the oldest Wheeler sibling who had her lips pursed. "I'm going trick or treating with Will." Jonathan stated before Nancy could speak. "You'll probably finish at eight..." Nancy droned, and Jonathan frowned. "and end up listening to whoever it is you're into these days and be in bed by 9. Come on Jonathan!" Nancy ended, smiling at Jonathan, her big doe eyes in full on begging mode. Steve appeared out of no where and pulled Nancy away from the other two. They were kissing against her locker. Hope rolled her eyes and dragged Jonathan away. "It actually could be fun, and I'm being serious." Hope said, pointing her finger to Jonathan before he could accuse her of being sarcastic again. She was not Dustin sarcasm was not her second language.

When Hope got home that afternoon she arrived just as Dustin was trying to modify his Halloween outfit. Luckily Hope had the exact sweatshirt that Alex Owens wore in the movie Flash Dance. Hope, being a big fan of Flash dance, had ordered memorabilia from the movie and the dress sweatshirt was one of the items that came in the gift box so all she needed to do was throw on some black leg warmers, black heels and a head band along with her wild curls and fresh make up. Dustin however was modifying his ghost trap so it would open, and snap shut at the press of a button. "Cool huh?" Dustin asked Hope as he demonstrated the modification. Hope nodded, "I hear Jonathan's trick or treating with you guys?" Hope

asked her brother who nodded, "Mrs Byers won't let Will go anywhere alone... not after what happened..." Dustin's words faded but then he snapped back to reality. "Anyway, what are you doing tomorrow night?" He asked, going back to fiddling with the ghost trap. "I'm probably going to go to Nancy's house and watch movies and eat all the popcorn while Nancy and Steve make out all evening." Hope lied and Dustin gagged at the thought. "Eww, don't put pictures like that in my head please!" As Hope walked past Dustin, she ruffled his hair which caused him to give her a death stare. The next morning Hope had packed her bags for the "sleepover" and watched as their mom took a million photos of Dustin in his ghostbusters uniform. "You look so cute Dusty!" She was cooing and awing which made Hope laugh. Dustin frowned at Hope's laughter, "You're ruining my vibe!" He called out to her after she had said goodbye to her mom just as Jonathan had hooted outside. "Bye Dusty!" Hope cried out to her brother in the same tone of voice their mom had used, and he flipped her the finger behind their moms back. Hope climbed into Jonathan's car and they were off to school.

Once they had arrived Hope saw that Billy and his new posse were crowded around the Camaro. The butterflies immediately jolted awake and Billy looked over to where she was, getting out of Jonathan's car. Hope could hear Tommy and Carol complaining about something, but Billy seemed to ignore them and walked straight up to her and Jonathan however, completely ignoring Jonathan, his focus solely on Hope. "Will you be at the party tonight?" He asked outright and Hope looked at Jonathan who looked just as confused. Jonathan shrugged and backed away from the situation. Hope's butterflies were cartwheeling and somersaulting, but no words came out of her mouth. She looked around and saw Vicki, Tina and Nicole, some of the most popular girls in the school, staring at the awkward confrontation happening in front of them. "Uh, Yeah, she'll be there..." Jonathan, leaning back into the conversation, answered for Hope who seemed to have blanked. Billy licked his lips and smiled at Hope, "Cool, come find me!" He ended, with a smirk at Hope before heading off into the school leaving Tommy and Carol outside. Carol grimaced at Hope who had only just come out of her trance. "What just happened, did he ask me to find him at the party?" Hope asked Jonathan, and Jonathan laughed, "I feel like this is a conversation you should have

with Nancy.” He responded. “Hmm, I’m not so sure about him though.” Jonathan added, watching Billy saunter into the building. “What happened to you?” Jonathan asked, “You’re usually so calm and collected, you froze out there.” He spoke of Hope who shrugged, “My mind blanked, I could hear what he was saying but no words wanted to come out.” Hope breathed out her frustration as they joined Nancy at the lockers. “I don’t know why he’s got me acting like a complete loser!” Hope complained and Nancy interrupted, “What happened?” She asked. Hope told Nancy of her encounter with Billy and Nancy rolled her eyes, “He really suggested that you come find him? Who does he think he is?” Nancy questioned, annoyance fleeting across her face. “What if he really does think I’m an escort?” Hope thought out loud, her eyes wide and Nancy’s eyes grew even wider and Hope thought they were about to pop out of her head. “Excuse me?” Nancy asked, a no-nonsense attitude in her voice. Hope laughed awkwardly and Nancy was still waiting for an explanation. Hope sighed and recounted her meeting with Billy to Nancy. “And you didn’t think you needed to tell me this?” Nancy asked, voice nearly shrill. Jonathan rolled his eyes, “I’ll see you guys later, I have to get to the dark room to develop some photos I took this morning.” Jonathan waved them off and headed down the corridor. Nancy rounded back on Hope. “Nancy I’m not ready for a Nancy Wheeler lecture please!” Hope exclaimed, closing her eyes. Nancy opened her mouth then closed it again and frowned. “Just be careful, whatever you decide to do.” Nancy warned Hope but Hope was distracted by the damn butterflies in her stomach again.

3. Tina's Halloween Bash

Summary for the Chapter:

It's Halloween and the teens go to Tina's Party

Chapter 3 – Tina's Halloween Bash

Once the day had ended Hope met Steve and Nancy outside by Steve's car. Jonathan was in the dark room and would only meet them at Tina's party later. Steve was going to drop them off at Nancy's and then fetch them later after they had gotten ready. The Wheelers knew the girls were going to a party, but the girls did not exactly mention what kind of party they were going to. Nancy had promised they would be home before curfew and that seemed to keep Karen and Ted Wheeler happy. Hope was smoking a cigarette in Nancy's room, but her head was hanging out the window, so she was the first one to see Steve arrive. Nancy came back into the room and frowned at Hope. "Can you stop that please, if my parents smell that they'll never trust me again." Nancy complained and Hope rolled her eyes and threw the cigarette out the window. "Steve's here anyway!" Hope said, straightening out her sweatshirt dress and fixing her headband. "Come on!" Hope said, pulling Nancy down the stairs with her. "You girls look gorgeous, let me take a quick picture!" Mrs Wheeler said, smiling widely while Steve rang the doorbell. "Love it!" Mrs Wheeler stated, taking one last picture with Steve in it.

Tina's house was in complete chaos when they arrived. There were Hawkins high students piling out onto the front lawn. Steve pushed open the door to reveal even more craziness. Students were everywhere, the different costumes made it difficult to try and pinpoint the exact student, but majority of the juniors and seniors were there. Steve held Nancy's hand as the three manoeuvred their way through the sea of students dancing in the lounge. "Drink?" Nancy called to Hope who nodded. "I think I'll sit tonight out." Steve said with a nod. Once in the kitchen, Nancy found a bowl of what seemed to be punch. She smelled it and looked at a kid nearby who was downing whatever it was. "PURE FUEL!" He cried out, banging his chest, and burping but continued to drink. Nancy shrugged to

Hope who had already found the red solo cups and had already started filling them up. She passed one to Nancy, "Ready?" Hope asked and they knocked their cups together, both taking a big gulp. Nancy was already dunking her cup into the punch again, "Hey, hey..." Steve warned, pulling Nancy's hand away, worried that she would drink too much "What, we're just being stupid teenagers, remember?" She stated and wandered off into the crowd. "Did I miss something?" Hope asked Steve who frowned and shook his head and followed Nancy.

Hope found herself alone and in need of a cigarette, so she dunked her cup into the punch, took a sip and went outside. "BILLY, 47, BILLY, 48" The crowd outside was shouting Billy's name and counting how many seconds he lasted doing a keg stand. Tommy and Jordan were holding Billy's legs up in the air and let him down congratulating him. "WOO, we have ourselves a new keg king ladies and gentlemen!" Tommy cried out and Hope rolled her eyes and thought that Steve was not going to be happy about that. She was lighting her cigarette as Tommy, Carol, Tina, and Billy walked past. Billy noticing her immediately but Carol noticing her for a whole other reason. "Henderson, we really should've communicated regarding our outfits." She said, rather rudely. Hope looked at her own outfit then at Carol's and laughed. "Oh shit." She stated and took a drag of her cigarette. Her and Carol were both dressed as Alex Owens, but Hope did not care that much, but she loved how it bothered Carol.

"Is that the original sweatshirt dress?" Tina cried out, pulling on the material that hugged Hope's body. Hope nodded and Tina smiled, "That's so cool! Sorry Carol but Hope did a way better job." Tina advised, "Anyway, I need another drink." Tina advised, making her way into her house. Carol rolled her eyes at Tina and gave Hope a dirty look before followed her inside. Billy stayed back with Tommy. "You're looking good Henderson." Billy slurred before joining the others inside. "We've got a new keg king, Harrington!" Hope heard Tommy say to Steve. Hope turned around to see Billy and Steve having a stare down and Nancy rolling her eyes before having more punch. Hope, with her cigarette between her lips, decided to join Nancy in the kitchen. "There you are!" Nancy spoke when she saw Hope, "Please put that out, Tina's parents don't even smoke!" Nancy

cried out and Hope pointed to Billy who was also smoking in the house. "Don't worry Nance, they're only coming back next week, the smell will be gone by then." Tina said, smiling at Hope before turning her gaze to Billy. "Billy come on I need to show you something." She called to him and Hope saw them disappear up the stairs and felt her butterflies deflate and a burning jealous rage started to form in her stomach.

She downed her drink and took another one and pulled Nancy onto the dancefloor. Steve joined them and before long they were partying the night away just like regular teenagers. Nancy and Hope were spinning around in circles, downing their drinks. "I need to pee!" Hope called out to Nancy after a couple of songs had gone by, and Nancy nodded and waved Hope off. Hope walked up the stairs, the same direction Billy and Tina had gone. She had not seen them come down yet and was only dancing with Nancy to try calm the jealousy. Why was she so jealous, nothing had even happened with her and Billy?

She found one of the bathrooms and went in, closing the door behind her. She looked at herself in the mirror and sighed. What was Billy Hargrove doing to her? She used the toilet and once she was finished, she sat down on the side of the bath and lit a cigarette. The doorknob turned and before Hope could protest at the entry, she heard Billy's voice, "I NEED TO PISS!" He called out to whoever he was talking to and Hope rolled her eyes. "Lovely!" She stated quietly and Billy turned around and saw her there. He closed the door and a naughty smirk spread across his face.

"Well, well, seems like I found you!" Billy stated before going over to the toilet. "Do you mind?" He asked and Hope frowned, "What, are you just going to do it while I'm right here?" She asked and before she could say anything else, he had unzipped his pants. Billy chuckled, he peed, zipped up his pants and turned to look at Hope who was finishing her cigarette. "I'm surprised you're still here." He laughed while turning on the tap and running the cold water over his hands. "Well you did not give me much of a chance to run away." Hope declared, stomping her cigarette out in the soap holder before throwing it in the toilet. Hope flushed the chain and was about to head out of the bathroom after this awkward encounter, but Billy

stopped her.

“You’re Hope right?” He asked, and she nodded, eyebrow raised, wondering where he was going with this. “I’ve heard about you, round school.” He stated and he took her left arm and pushed her sleeve up. The scar gleamed in the dimly lit bathroom, the scar tingled, and Hope yanked her arm out of his hand, a scowl forming on her face. “Some sort of animal bite?” He asked, his face twisting while Hope was pulling her sleeve back down. “Tommy told me about it.” Billy nodded and checked himself out in the mirror. “You don’t say much, do you?” Billy asked after a few seconds of silence and Hope scowled some more. “You don’t really give a girl a chance, do you?” Hope asked and Billy smirked at her again, licking his lips. He moved his body, so he was directly in front of her and Hope breathed in, those damn butterflies up to their usual tricks.

She did not know if her courage had finally come out of hiding or if it was something to do with the punch she had downed earlier but Hope felt a need to rest her hand on Billy’s glistening chest and she did. He only had a leather jacket on with those oh-so tight jeans. She felt him stiffen at her touch, but he watched her intently. She dragged her finger down to his navel, softly. She suddenly realized what she was doing and took her hand off and cleared her throat. “Wow, it’s hot in here!” She stated, waving her hands in front of her face, trying to make cool air blow in her direction. Billy grabbed her hands to stop her and pulled her towards him, their lips crashing almost immediately.

Hope wrapped her arms around his neck while his hands were cupping her face. She stopped for fresh air and Billy picked her up and placed her on the sink counter. She wrapped her legs around his waist, and they continued kissing. Suddenly there was a loud knock on the door and Hope knocked over the soap dish in fright. Billy stopped and frowned at the door. “HELLO! Get out of there already!” Someone was shouting from outside. Hope looked around and realized they were still in the bathroom. She lost track of time and space the moment she had touched Billy’s chest. Billy growled and looked back at Hope, “Looks like we got to go.” Hope stated and took one last look at herself in the mirror before jumping off the sink counter and turning the doorknob and revealing Carol, looking

irritated. "Oh, thank god!" She cried but stopped dead in her tracks when she saw Hope and Billy. "The doorknob got stuck!" Hope exclaimed as Billy walked ahead of her and down the stairs. Hope watched him go but did not run after him. Her gaze turned back to Carol when she spoke, "You and Hargrove stuck in the bathroom, together?" Carol smirked, "Tina is going to be pissed!" Carol said, she shoved Hope out of the way and entered the bathroom and closed the door.

Hope made her way downstairs in search of Nancy. She bumped into Jordan, one of Tommy's posse members and he looked at her, "Is everything okay, Henderson?" He asked casually, handing her a cup of whatever it was he was drinking. She looked at it but did not sip it. "I'm actually looking for Nancy." Hope insisted and Jordan shrugged, "I saw her leave with that Byers kid." He advised Hope who sighed in frustration. "She was pretty out of it, Harrington also stormed off..." Jordan added, and Hope nodded and walked off towards the kitchen where she dropped the drink Jordan had given her into the sink, not trusting anything given to her by one of Tommy Hagan's cronies.

She placed the cup on the counter before heading out of the front door. Steve's car was gone and so was Jonathan's.

She turned around, ready to enter the house again, to look for someone who could give her a ride home but this time she bumped into Billy who seemed to be leaving. He looked at her and she eyed out his keys. "Do you need a ride?" He asked before she could say anything. "I've been ditched, so yes, please..." Hope said, a small smile crossing her face. He nodded and walked ahead of her and Hope got into the passenger side of the Camaro. "Where to?" He asked, as the car started. Hope suddenly remembered that she was staying at Nancy's house but could not show up now at this time, she also knew she couldn't go home because again she'd lied to her mom, saying they were just going to be watching movies. She sighed and looked at Billy, her face going a light shade of pink. "Actually... I can't go home, umm..." She looked out the window thinking of where she could go. There was silence for a bit as they drove down the street. "It's fine, you can stay with me, my folks will not be impressed if we wake them up, so probably need to climb through

my bedroom window.” He stated and Hope stared at Billy. His eyes were staring straight ahead but she could see the smirk on his face. She rolled her eyes and Billy laughed, “I’m serious, Flash dance, we can’t make a sound if they’re home.”

They pulled into Billy’s driveway and he got out of the car. He sighed with relief when he saw the other car was not there. “They’re at Harrington’s parents Halloween party.” Billy said, disgust in his voice at the mention of Steve. Hope nodded and followed Billy into the house. He opened the door and the two walked into the dark, quiet house. “Max isn’t back yet either...” Hope saw a frown form on Billy’s face as he switched the light on. “Water?” He offered and she nodded as he poured them two glasses. Hope followed Billy down the passage to his bedroom. Once they were in, he took off his leather jacket and Hope felt her stomach soar as he began to unbutton his jeans. Hope got out of her heels and removed her leg warmers. She knew she could sleep in the sweatshirt dress.

She sat on the edge of the bed and looked around Billy’s room. There was a huge poster of a lady in a swimsuit to Hope’s right and above her was a Metallica poster. Billy got into the bed and Hope copied him. She was nervous but she also felt the odd desire to kiss the life out of him. Her leg brushed against his under the blanket as she made herself comfortable. They said nothing to each other but felt like they were saying everything. “Thanks.” Hope finally broke the silence and Billy looked at her. “No problem...” He said and turned over to face the window. Hope noticed a fading bruise on Billy’s back but did not say anything further as they both drifted off to sleep.

4. The Day After the Night Before

Summary for the Chapter:

Hope meets Max and does a walk of shame. Dustin is hiding something

Chapter 4 - The Day After the Night Before

“BILLY, GET UP THE HELL UP, YOU’RE GOING TO BE LATE!” Neil Hargrove yelled as he pounded on his son’s door the next morning. Hope started to groan loudly, but Billy put his hand over her mouth before she could speak. She opened her eyes and stared at Billy who was staring at the door. “I’M UP!” Billy yelled back and Neil Hargrove stomped down the hallway. “Sorry flash dance, looks like we overslept.” Billy spoke, quietly. He started throwing on some clothes and looked at Hope who was still lying in bed, looking confused. “We’ve got school!” He stated, reminding her and Hope sighed. “I can’t go to school I have no clothes.” Hope whined, looking down at her Halloween costume from last night. “Try these.” He threw a pair of black sweatpants at her and she stared at them as they fell into her lap. She got out of bed and put the pants on. They were a little baggy for her, but she found her head wrap from last night and tied it around her waist in hope of keeping the pants up. She found her heels and rolled her eyes. “Great, I’m going to look like a hot mess.” She complained, placing her feet in the shoes, and staring at herself in the mirror. Billy chuckled. He had lit a cigarette and was busy finishing up his hair. “Bathroom...” Billy pointed out the door, Hope nodded and Billy hid Hope away from his father while they scurried across the passageway into the bathroom. He closed the door and brushed his teeth. He handed Hope a spare toothbrush that was in the cupboard. Hope brushed her teeth after Billy and just as they had done before they hurried back to Billy’s room. “I guess I’m going to have to take the window?” Hope asked and Billy nodded, “If you don’t want my father breathing down your neck this morning, you will do that.” He ended. Finishing off his cigarette and his hair. Billy opened the window for Hope who climbed out of it, heels sinking into the grass. Hope stared at her reflection in the window one last time, her curls were wild, her make

up smudged and her outfit a disgrace but she shrugged to herself admitting defeat before she made her way to Billy's car, she threw her handbag over her shoulder after fishing out her cigarettes. She lit one and waited for Billy. "MAX!" Billy yelled as he appeared on the front porch. "I'm coming, I'm coming." Max, the younger of the Hargrove siblings, addressed her brother. "Get in." Billy ordered the two girls. Max stared at Hope before getting into the backseat. "I'm Max." She introduced herself and Hope smiled, half-heartedly. Billy's eyes darted from Hope to Max. "Hope." Hope responded, dutifully. "I don't usually look like this..." Hope added, she saw a grin form on Billy's face, but it was gone within a second once Max spoke, "Don't worry. You're not the first girl I've seen look like this at our house." Max responded and sat back in her seat. Billy frowned now and looked at Hope as they drove towards the high school. Hope was staring out the window so Billy could not see her facial expression towards Max's comment. .

Once they got to the school, Max skated off without as much as a goodbye to the two teenagers. Hope sighed with relief when she looked around and saw most of the students were already filing into the school, since the bell had already rung no one would see what a disgrace she looked like. She knew she would be late for her first lesson, but she figured if Mr. Honey could constantly be late, she could at least be late this one time and besides, she needed to get to the gym lockers. "Bye, and thanks again." Hope said to Billy who nodded and sauntered up to the school with Hope trailing behind him. She saw a few girls from a year below her watching her with intensity. They had obviously put two and two together and were now whispering to one another. "Shit." Hope stated before jogging up the school steps in her heels and heading for the gym lockers. Once she had got to her locker she punched in the combo and it opened. She threw in her heels in and replaced them with her trainers. She had no wet wipes in her locker, so she went over to Nancy's locker and punched in her combination and once again it opened without any hassles. She grabbed one of the wet wipes and closed the locker before going back over to hers and wiping off her make up from last night. Hope brushed at her curls before giving up at the brushing due to the hairspray to knot ratio that was going on in her hair right now. She sighed and sprayed what deodorant was left in her can and closed the locker door. She ventured out into the now quiet hallway

and grabbed her books at her actual locker. She made her way to her English class. Mr Honey took one look at her, "Ah Ms. Henderson." The class sniggered and Hope smiled, trying to ignore them. "Sorry Mr Honey, it won't happen again." She responded, making her way to her desk. "Walk of shame, Henderson?" Carol mocked, "Weren't you wearing that last night?" Carol added and Hope looked at Billy who was sitting next to Tommy. Billy laughed. "Does this have anything to do with you?" Tommy asked Billy who looked up at Hope. Hope had a scowl on her face and was aiming it directly at Billy who shrugged. "I don't know who Henderson did last night, dude but it wasn't me." He leaned back in his chair, sending Hope a do not worry look before she turned around. "But I saw you two come out of the bathroom..." Carol protested but she was ignored by the boys and by Hope who had turned her interest back to Mr. Honey.

After her first three periods she headed to the gym for Phys Ed. The girls would usually just sit around and watch the boys practice basketball. Ms. Jules was too soft to fight off Coach Tucker so she would just give the girls full marks for at least showing up. Hope looked around for Nancy, but she could not find her, so she settled down next to two of the cheerleaders, Heather, and Natalie. They were talking animatedly about Tina's party last night. "She tried to hook up with him but apparently he declined, saying he wasn't into high school girls and their drama." Heather stated and Natalie nodded in interest. As Heather continued her story the gymnasium doors opened and Hope's gaze turned to a shirtless Billy, ambling across the room. The butterflies soared through her stomach making Hope feel a little dizzy, but she continued to watch. "Speak of the devil..." Heather commented, the two girls shot their flirtatious glances in his direction. Hope wondered who Heather and Natalie had been talking about so now she knew it was about Billy but who did he reject last night – Tina? Because he sure as hell had not rejected her. The period was nearly over, and it had consisted of Billy patronizing Steve who seemed too down and out to fight back. It had annoyed Hope who had been yelling encouraging words to Steve so he would fight back. Hope got to her feet, knowing that the bell would ring shortly, to go find Nancy, but she heard Nancy's voice echo around the room, "STEVE!" She had called and waved him over. Hope looked to Steve who was sweating profusely. He frowned

before jogging slowly towards the pretty brunette. The two disappeared out of the gym. Hope walked towards the doors as the bell rang. She wanted to catch Steve and Nancy before they both disappeared. She overheard them talking next to the gym and she stopped to listen. "Where were you this morning, I missed first period?" Nancy asked him through gritted teeth. "I came to school." Steve replied, casually. "Do you not remember what you said to me last night?" Steve added and Nancy was quiet, thinking. "I know I spilled punch on myself but that's about it." Nancy spoke, trying to piece things together. "So, you don't remember calling me bullshit, saying our love was bullshit?" Steve questioned and Nancy responded quickly, "Why would I say that?" She asked. "I don't know." Steve shrugged, "But I do know that drunken words speak a sober mind..." Steve said, poetically. A guy from the basketball team ran past Hope and stopped when he saw Steve, "Steve, Coach Tucker needs to talk." He called Steve who nodded. "Steve!" Nancy exclaimed and Steve waved his hand in her direction, spotting Hope, Hope smiled at Steve, but he continued walking. Hope rounded the corner and found Nancy, looking confused. "I don't know, I can't remember." Nancy said the minute she saw Hope's questionable facial expression.

At the end of the day the two girls walked to Jonathan's car knowing that they would probably not get a lift back with Steve since he had been avoiding the two all day. "How did your night go?" Nancy turned to Hope, Hope shrugged her shoulders. "And what are you wearing?" Nancy eyeballed Hope's outfit and Hope laughed. "Please don't ask me." Hope stated cringing. "If that's not a walk of shame outfit Hope Henderson then I don't know what is!" Nancy chuckled. "I've been in this outfit the entire day and you're only noticing now?" Hope asked, playfully. Nancy pouted her lips, "Sorry, I've been preoccupied." She stated, watching Steve drive off in his BMW. "It's okay and I'd rather not talk about it, to be honest." Hope started and ended, her eyes drifting to Billy Hargrove who was strolling over to his car, lighting a cigarette. Hope grabbed her own out of her bag and lit one too. Nancy gagged. "Stop!" She moaned, moving her position a little further away from Hope so she could not smell the nicotine but noticing Hope's gaze directed towards the new guy. "I heard Carol tell Tina that you hooked up with Billy last night?" Nancy asked, her left eyebrow raised high. "And that you arrived at school with him this morning... another source not Carol." Nancy

added. "God, I hate high school gossip!" Hope cried, bringing the cigarette to her lips and inhaling. "I thought you would never be a part of it actually!" Nancy agreed. "So, did you?" Nancy pressed and Hope stomped her cigarette out in the sand below her feet and looked up at Nancy. She chose her words carefully, but she took too long to answer which helped Nancy make up her own mind. "OH MY GOD, YOU DID!" Nancy squealed, her voice echoing over the carpark. Billy looked at the two girls, shook his head and got into his car. Obviously, Max had taken too long to get to the car because Billy drove off without her. "JONATHAN!" Hope cried out, when she saw Jonathan, trying to distract Nancy from her sexy make out session with Billy Hargrove. "No, you have to tell me what happened!" Nancy pushed on, pointing her finger at Hope who shook her head and laughed. "We need a ride, please!" Hope asked him, ignoring Nancy's pestering, and he nodded. "Sure, what happened to Steve?" Jonathan asked Nancy who shrugged, "He needed to be somewhere I guess?" Nancy replied and shot Hope a do-not-tell-him stare. Jonathan dropped Nancy home first since she lived the closest to the school. Hope managed to get her things from last night from Nancy before Jonathan took her home. "How's your scar doing?" Jonathan asked Hope who touched it out of habit. "It seems fine, why?" Hope asked, curiously. "Will's been having..." He paused, trying to find the right words, "episodes." Hope nodded and decided to inform Jonathan of her throbbing scar "My nightmares have stopped, but the throbbing is still there, slightly." Hope informed him. Jonathan took his one hand off the steering wheel and brushed it through his hair. "I try to forget about it, so I haven't really noticed it that much." Hope added and Jonathan nodded. "The smoking?" Jonathan asked and Hope nodded. "It helps..." She admitted while chewing on the skin of her thumb. They drove onto Hope's street and once they reached her house she smiled at Jonathan, "Thanks Byers, hopefully I'll get my car back soon!" Hope told him and he nodded. "I don't mind, really." Jonathan said with a smile, he waved and drove off once Hope had got her stuff out of the boot.

When Hope entered the Henderson house, she dropped her bags in her room. "DUSTIN?" She called out, but silence ensued. Hope checked her watch, it was 15:00. She wondered where he could be while she turned on the shower, ready to wash last night off her body. When she got out the shower, she put on her pyjama's and

folded Billy's pants and put them in her cupboard. She would give them back to him another day. At half past four Dustin bounded through the front door while Hope was lazing on the couch watching trash tv. Dustin, who was carrying 5 library books and looking guilty looked at Hope and stammered, "uuhh...." He stumbled and Hope rolled her eyes, "Science stuff?" She asked and he nodded and hurried to his room. Hope thought she heard some sort of screeching coming from his room but just maybe she was wrong.

5. Of Monsters and Men

Summary for the Chapter:

Something is lurking in the darkness, coming for Hope and Will.

Chapter 5 - Of Monsters and Men

Hope and Dustin were getting ready for school on that Thursday morning, 2nd of November 1984. The Autumn sun shone through her bedroom window as much as it could. Hope shrugged on her denim jacket before meeting Dustin at the end of the passage. He was shoving his proton pack from his ghostbusters costume into his backpack. "Good Morning my darlings." Claudia Henderson called to her two children. Hope watched Dustin as he zipped up his backpack hastily, passing him with a raised eyebrow. He grinned, sheepishly, at his sister while he fixed his red, white, and blue hat on his head, as the two of them entered the kitchen to Claudia making them breakfast. Mews, their moms' cat, brushed past Hope's legs and meowed at her but hissed at Dustin's backpack. "Morning mom, I've got AV Club this afternoon." Dustin reminded his mother who nodded and plated their toast with butter and jam. "Have you heard anything about my car?" Hope asked her mom who nodded, "It should be ready by next week." Hope breathed a sigh of relief and bit down into her toast. "I have a shift tomorrow at the Arcade, would I be able to use your car?" Hope asked and Claudia nodded, "I'll make sure I'm home by then." Claudia said and the horn of Jonathan's car sounded outside. "Gotta go!" Hope called out, grabbing her bag, and slinging it over her shoulder. "Do you want a ride?" She asked Dustin who shook his head. "Biking." Dustin responded with a mouth filled with toast. Hope waved to her family before heading out the door. The air was cool outside, despite the sun shining, and Hope was glad she had put on the denim jacket. She opened the passenger door and got into the car, almost immediately lighting a cigarette before they were even out of the driveway. "Dustin's acting weird." Hope told Jonathan who looked at her, unsurprised. "Doesn't he always act weird?" He asked and Hope chuckled. She nibbled at the skin on her thumb before taking a drag of her cigarette and blowing the smoke

out of the window that was blowing cool air into the car. "I think he's hiding something." She ended, having the last drag before throwing it out of the window as they arrived at the school.

Nancy was waiting for Jonathan and Hope at the front of the school. "Did you speak to Steve?" Hope asked her and she shook her head as Billy Hargrove ambled up the steps with Carol, Tina and Tommy following him like they were his fans. Billy looked Hope once over before giving her a smirk and a nod and Tina gave Hope a dirty look before disappearing into the school. "Wow, if looks could kill!" Nancy said, eyes wide. "Apparently he turned her down." Hope told Nancy of the conversation she had overheard. "So, what are you guys?" Nancy asked, meaning her and Billy. "A once off probably, it was Halloween, drinks were flowing, you know..." Hope said, shrugging. She brushed a stray curl out of her eyes as they climbed the steps into the school, but her butterflies were going wild and Hope breathed in and out, trying to control herself.

When the bell rang signalling the end of the day Hope made her way out of the school. "Did you hear, Nancy Wheeler and Jonathan Byers skipped fourth period and they haven't been back since?" Hope overheard Heather tell one of the cheerleaders. Hope frowned, that could not be true, Jonathan knew he needed to take Hope home. She scanned the car park for Jonathan's car and found the car to be missing. She frowned to herself, searching for her cigarettes. Once the box had been found she made her way to the other side of the front building, lighting the cigarette as she went. She pressed her back against the cool bricks as she started to smoke. She closed her eyes as she inhaled but was brought back to Earth when someone cleared their throat. Billy Hargrove was watching Hope intensely, hungrily. "Are you alone?" He asked her, casually. Hope nodded and he walked closer.

He was closing in on Hope and she could not move. Her mind was racing, wondering, what he was doing, her butterflies doing acrobats in her stomach. He cupped her face before she could stop him, and their lips crashed. Hope dropped her cigarette as she snaked her arms around his neck. "Can you feel it?" He asked, voice soft, almost a growl. She did not answer him, but she had a feeling he was asking if she could feel the chemistry between them, so she just pushed her

body into him as his lips kissed her neck. She moaned as his fingers traced the top of her jeans, asking for entrance. Billy lifted Hope's legs, so she was wrapped around his waist. Hope moaned again as Billy's hold of her lower back got stronger, pushing them closer together.

"Well shit!" Someone spoke, someone that was not Billy or herself. She removed her lips from Billy's and looked to the left where the sound had come from and saw Carol and Tommy, both smirking devilishly. Billy pushed himself away from Hope, her legs dropping to the ground instantly and at that moment pain seared through Hope's scar. She clutched at it, the pain worse than ever before, it felt like something was scratching the scar from the inside, trying to escape. Her eyes widened in horror as she looked at the scar, practically ripping itself open.

Billy had almost walked off, embarrassed at being caught, but more annoyed than embarrassed since all he had thought about these past two days was Hope and he finally had her, but before he could walk off he caught sight of Hope's scar, which had started bleeding again and watched as she suffered, frozen on the spot. She screamed on the inside as the pain being inflicted on her worsened and Hope did not care that Billy, Carol or Tommy had been watching her, shocked. Her gaze roamed around, hazily, as the tears started to pool in her eyes, her eyes landing on the giant shadow that hovered over the middle school field, the shadow seemed to be calling out to her and she found herself walking, running towards it.

"HOPE?" Billy called after her, but Hope did not stop.

She continued to run towards the shadow which was pulling her in. She dashed towards the middle school, her boots hitting the ground with a thud every step she took. When she arrived, she skidded to a halt as she kicked the door open with her foot. Her wound dripping blood up the stairs as she made her way. "WILL!" Mike Wheeler cried as he dashed out of a classroom and skidded down the hallway. He was running to the end of the hallway towards the doors leading out onto the field. Dustin and Max slid in front of Hope now, not noticing her until she ran past him. "HOLY SHIT HOPE!" Dustin cried, seeing the blood dripping from her scar. She was still holding it with her other hand, which was now full of blood too. Mike spun around to

see the two Henderson siblings, staring fearfully at Hope's wound, one which had healed but was now dripping fresh blood. Lucas ran in from the open doors at the other end of the hall, "THE FIELD!" He called out to the teenagers who were staring at Hope, not understanding what was happening. Mrs Byers ran into the building, completely ignoring the four teenagers staring at Hope's scar. "What the..." Max had started to say, staring at Hope but they were reminded about Will when Mrs Byers ran past. "Mrs Byers!" Hope called out and ran after Will's mom. "WILL!" Mrs Byers called out, eventually running out onto the field, followed by the teenagers. Hope gasped, "What the hell is that?" Hope cried out in horror, but the shadow quickly disappeared, and her pain ceased immediately in her scar. Joyce Byers grabbed her son and wrapped him in a hug, "Are you okay?" She asked him, voice breaking as Will nodded and looked around at his friends, confusion in his eyes which lingered on Hope for a while longer before turning to his mother. "Come on, let's go!" Joyce told her son and she looked at the kids. "Is he okay?" Dustin asked, straightening the hat on his head. "I'll have to give Dr Owens a call..." Joyce nodded, "But I'm sure it's nothing." Joyce's eyes glazed over as she saw the blood on Hope's arm. Hope looked down at the wound, which was turning into a scar again, the wound was healing itself and Hope waved her hand at Mrs Byers, "I'm fine." Hope said, nodding. Mrs Byers and Will hobbled off and Dustin grabbed Hope's arm to inspect it at a closer level. Max, Lucas, and Mike were staring at Hope as Dustin checked and re-checked her scar which was no longer bleeding. "What the hell just happened?" Dustin asked but Hope, who shrugged, turned her gaze to where she had seen the giant shadow hovering over Will Byers, and she wondered where it had disappeared to.

Hope walked back to the high school with Dustin, Max, Lucas, and Mike who were all asking her questions. "What happened, where were you when it happened, how did it happen?" Hope did not know how to answer the questions. Her bloodied arm and hands had dried and she needed to wash it off. Billy was still waiting by his car in the parking lot as the party approached the high school. Hope felt his eyes searching her body, looking for answers. He walked towards them, ready to yell at Max for taking so long but Hope told the kids to stay back. "I'm sorry." She said to him, not knowing what she was apologizing for, but the words spewed out of her mouth like word

vomit. He eyed the blood on her arm and hand. "MAX!" He yelled over Hope's shoulder at the girl with flaming red hair. "What the hell are you doing?" He demanded, anger oozing through every word he spoke. "I had a meeting." Max responded coolly. "What the hell happened back there?" He now rounded on Hope. "Science experiment." Dustin responded quickly, poking his head around Hope's body as she tried to block them from Billy's view. Billy grabbed Hope's arm, pushed the denim sleeve up and stared at the scar which was still covered in dried blood. Hope shuddered, she really needed to wash it off. Billy let go of Hope's arm and frowned at the kids behind her. "Come on, get in the car, we're going." He demanded of Max and took one last look at Hope, his eyes heavy with regret but Hope saw something else in his eyes that she could not pinpoint. Hope watched as the Camaro sped off down the street and turned back to Dustin. "Max's brother?" Lucas and Dustin said in unison looking at Hope, the disgust on their face almost identical as they wondered why and how he knew about Hope's scar. Hope stared at the boys, blankly but kept quiet, not giving away anything. She spied out Steve's BMW. She could get a ride with him. Steve slumped out the school and saw the party hovering around. "Well I need a ride home so..." She called out to Steve. "Harrington, can I get a ride?" She asked, leaving her brother and his friends to stare after her as she rushed over to Steve. "Sure, what about the rest of the dream team?" He asked, and Hope turned to look at her brother who was still gaping at her. "They've got their bikes." She answered for them before getting into Steve's car. The ride home with Steve was quiet until he spoke as they rounded the corner onto Maple Street. "

Did Nancy and Jonathan skip school together?" He asked in an annoyed tone, rubbing his hand in his bigger-than-life hair. Hope nodded and chewed on the skin of her thumb, waiting for Steve to explode but he did not. He just sighed. "Did you guys break up?" Hope asked and Steve shrugged. He honestly did not know what he and Nancy were at this point. "By the way, what happened to your arm?" Steve asked, seeing as the blood had seeped through the sleeve of her denim jacket. "Nothing." Hope stated, drawing her sleeve over her hand, while staring out the window, still chewing on the skin of her thumb. Steve sighed again as he turned into her driveway. "Thanks for the ride." She stated as she got out the car. "See you tomorrow?" She asked and Steve nodded before driving off. As Hope

washed off the blood on her arm in the shower that night the shadow that hovered over Hawkins middle school field lingered in her brain. The look Billy had given her before he sped off lingered in her brain as she tossed and turned in bed.

The scar on her arm tingled throughout the night but not letting off as much pain as she had felt that day. Pain that made her worry. Pain that made her think there was something else looming in the dark, coming for her.

6. The Creature

Summary for the Chapter:

A darkness is creeping in on Hope, Dustin catches Hope in an awkward position and Hope meets Dustin's new pet

Chapter 6 - The Creature

The next morning, after not having much sleep the night before, Hope walked into the kitchen after getting ready for the day. Her pleated, above the knee, black dress was swishing against her thighs as her flat, beige knee-high boots hit the carpet. She was holding her black leather jacket in her hands since she knew she would need it in the chilly November air. Her long brown curls were tied up in a ponytail and her make-up was light. "Don't forget about my shift this afternoon, I need the car." She reminded her mom who nodded while she fed Mews. Hope waited for about 15 minutes before realizing that Jonathan was late. She looked at the clock on the wall, which showed 07:30. She walked to the phone which was hanging on the wall and dialed the Byer's residence. Joyce Byers picked up on the first ring. "Hopper?" Joyce asked and Hope cleared her throat, "Hey Mrs. Byers, it's Hope." She started and Joyce was silent on the end, "Is Jonathan on his way?" Hope added and Joyce, who was shaking her head to herself on the other side of the phone where Hope could not see, spoke, "Uh, No, he actually didn't come home last night, saying he had a project or something due..." Hope's brow furrowed as she thanked Mrs Byers and hung up the phone. "Is everything ok?" Claudia asked her daughter, who looked more like her father by the day. "I need a ride to school, apparently Jonathan's already there." Hope lied to her mom who nodded. "Here you can take the car, then you can go straight to your shift." Claudia said, handing Hope the car keys. "Where's Dustin?" Hope asked, noticing her absent brother. "He said he needed to get to school early, he's left already." Claudia ended. "Thanks. I'll see you later!" Hope called as she made her way to the car.

When Hope got to the school, driving passed the middle school as she always did, she saw Dustin, Lucas, Mike, and Max hovering by the

dumpster. Lucas was throwing black bags out of the dumpster and it looked like Mike and Max were bickering. She parked her car at the high school and walked over to the kids at the middle school. "What are you guys doing?" She asked, just as the bell rang for her to get to class. The kids looked up at her, Dustin gulped, "We're uuhh..." He stammered while Hope's eyes scanned the kids who were grinning at her sheepishly. "Science stuff?" Mike questioned, looking back at Dustin with a shrug. Hope frowned and rolled her eyes, "You guys better get to class!" She pointed out, as other kids were heading into the school.

Hope waved them off and walked back to the high school, noticing the dark blue Camaro immediately. The butterflies swirled gleefully in her stomach. Billy got out of his car as she walked past it and he walked straight past Hope, ignoring her completely, not even a little smirk, not even a wink of his eyes, nothing. The butterflies deflated and a frown formed on her face. Hope stomped up the steps towards her locker, grabbing her books and headed to English. Carol sniggered to Tommy as Hope walked into the class. Hope realized she had not had time to have a cigarette yet and she could feel the nicotine crave start. She shoved her chair out and sat down, not even looking back at Billy who would probably just disappoint her. Look, she understood that he was probably freaked out about what happened yesterday, maybe he thought she was a weirdo but to just ignore her? It made the anger in her stomach bubble. She chewed on the same piece of skin on her thumb, chewing it raw while her left leg jiggled, her mood unsettled. Her mind was anywhere but the English class. She thought of Nancy and Jonathan. They ditched again! What were they doing that they did not find the need to include her? Hope did not even notice Mr. Honey enter the room as she doodled on the paper in front of her. Hope's fidgeting and leg jiggling continued throughout the lesson. Once the bell rang, she grabbed her bag and dashed out the class before anyone could stop her.

She found Steve at the lockers. "They're not here, again!" Hope advised Steve, who ran his hand through his Harrington hair while he watched Hope as she yanked her locker open and shoved her English textbook inside. "Are you okay?" He asked her, noticing her thumb which had started to bleed from her chewing on it, and Hope

shrugged her shoulders before heading off to her next class.

At lunch Carol and Tina rounded on Hope in the bathroom. "Look who it is, it's Hopeful Henderson." Carol pressed, an evil laugh exiting her mouth, "hopeful that the new boy will actually like her for a change but it seems like he's already gotten bored of you, don't you think Tina?" Carol added, her eyes darting over to her friend and her smirk getting wider as Tina frowned at Carol, "Don't you mean, Hopeless Henderson?" Tina asked, her laughter echoing through Hope's ears. "Too bad that's all Billy will ever think of you!" Tina exclaimed, before they left Hope alone, their laughter echoing down the hall. Hope stared at herself in the mirror. Her green orbs turning a coal like colour, nearing on black. She closed her eyes and breathed out while pulling the hand towel out of the dispenser to dry her hands. The scar on the inside of her left arm started to throb. The anger that she had been feeling all morning was taking over her body and she could not stop it. She stared back at her eyes which were now pitch black where the green would be. "Hopeless Henderson, that's all he'll ever think of you!" Tina's words echoed in her mind. Hope shook her head and decided her school day was over. Hope grabbed her bag from the bathroom counter and forced the bathroom door open with a shove of her shoulder. The darkness in her eyes never faded, not once, if anything it grew stronger with each and every step she took down the hallway of Hawkins high. Hopeless Henderson... The words echoing in her mind, making the anger in her body bubble, desperate to burst. She reached the exit, not before passing by Billy who was heading to the cafeteria. He watched as Hope made her way to the giant exit doors. He watched as she pushed the door open, he watched as she turned around, feeling his eyes on her and when their eyes met Billy saw the darkness in them, watched as she shook her head and he watched as she disappeared into the sunlight outside. He also noticed that he never saw her wander the halls for the rest of the designated school day.

Once she reached the Palace arcade her temper seemed to calm down. She knew her shift only started in two hours, but she did not know where else to go. Hope grabbed at her cigarettes and got out the car, with her shaky hands she lit one and leaned against the car door. Hope did not understand where the anger had come from. She

usually did not care what Carol or Tina had to say. She was usually so calm and collected and usually no one bothered her because she did not react. She checked her reflection in the side mirror, her eyes had gone back to the usual emerald green. After finishing her cigarette, she grabbed her bag before heading into the arcade. "Your shift doesn't start for another 2 hours, Henderson." Keith spoke when he noticed her enter, he was holding a bag of cheese balls, popping them into his mouth. He ruffled his longish hair, cheese dust flying everywhere. "I know, but I'll start earlier." She said, going into the staff room behind the counter. "I'm not paying you overtime you know?" Keith called to her as she pulled the purple arcade t-shirt, that she put in her school bag that morning, over her dress. Hope rolled her eyes as she emerged from the staff room and took her usual seat behind the counter, flipping open the magazine that she had read a few times before.

Around five o'clock the arcade became super busy and Hope could not keep up. Dustin and his friends were shouting at the Miss Pac Man machine and a few minutes later Max strolled in, skateboard in hand and following her was Billy. Hope stopped handling the change that she was giving to some 4th grader and stared at the sun-kissed, Californian boy. Hope looked over to Max who was eyeing out Dustin, Mike and Lucas who were now hitting the machine which apparently stole their quarter. She chose to stay by the Dig Dug machine as she watched Billy out of the corner of her eye, approaching Hope. "What do you want?" Hope spat at Billy who arched his eyebrow at the tone of her voice. "Moody, are we?" He asked, a smirk forming on his face. "We need to talk." He spoke, his voice low and soft as if he did not want to be overheard. "I'm working." Hope responded, her tone of voice causing Billy to raise an eyebrow as she casually continued counting the change for the 4th grader who was still waiting, looking up at Billy and then to Hope. "Sorry Nicky, here you go." She told the little boy who grabbed his coins and dashed back to his friends. "Can we talk now?" Billy asked, he was tapping his fingers on the counter and Hope sighed and looked at Billy, his ocean eyes pouring into hers. He stared back at her, he noticed her eyes were back to their brilliant green colour. "Why'd you ditch school?" He asked, curiously and Hope looked over at Keith, before frowning at Billy "I'm taking a quick break." She told him and he waved her away, going back to his comic book. "Uh, can

we talk in private?" Billy questioned and he looked back at Max who was still watching Dustin and Lucas. "KEITH, THE GODDAMN MACHINE ATE OUR QUARTER AGAIN!" Dustin yelled while kicking the machine and Keith rolled his eyes and walked over to the boys, still holding his bag of cheese balls. Hope shook her head at Dustin who stopped kicking the machine. Dustin eyed Billy out as Hope lifted the latch on the counter so Billy could walk through it, he followed her into the staff room and Hope closed the door. "What's this about?" Hope asked as her butterflies arose and whirled around her stomach. "I need you to keep Max away from those weirdos kicking the Ms Pacman machine." He spoke, his voice still low and sultry but Hope frowned. "Excuse me?" She asked him, her tone of voice cold and confused and he spoke again, "You heard me." He stated, shoving his hands in the pockets of his jeans. Hope raised her left eyebrow and walked closer to Billy. "One of those weirdos is my brother you know?" Hope advised him through gritted teeth and Billy shrugged, "Whatever happened yesterday with you and those kids." He started and Hope sighed, "I don't understand exactly what happened but they seem to be the type of kids who get up to mischief and if Maxine hangs around them she'll get up to mischief and if that happens it'll end up being my problem." Billy told her, his voice dangerously low, his eyes flickering to Hope's lips, but he was controlling himself. "They seem to hang out here a lot and you work here so you can keep an eye on them." Billy added. "What about when they're at school, who's going to keep an eye on them then?" Hope asked, casually leaning against one of the broken games that needed to be repaired. Billy frowned and Hope scoffed, "You're an asshole, I cannot believe that this is the first actual conversation we are having with one another without sticking our tongues down each other's throat, and it's you telling me to babysit your little sister so she doesn't fall in with the wrong crowd? I don't even know Max but I think she can handle herself and that wrong crowd you're talking about are actually some of the best kids in Hawkins so no, I won't help you make sure Maxine doesn't hang out with them." Hope ended, folding her arms across her chest.

Billy closed his eyes and breathed in deeply. "She's not my sister." He informed her, his eyes opening and focusing on Hope. "What is she then?" Hope asked, her eyebrow arched in surprise. "She's a shit bird who likes causing problems for me." He ended, darkly. Hope stared

at Billy for a few seconds as he ran his hand through his hair in frustration, she noticed a deep cut on his head where his hair line met his forehead, a bruise was starting to form. His curly fringe fell over his forehead, covering the cut as he started to walk towards the door. "Wait." Hope told him, her hand grabbing his bicep, not wanting this to be the last that they spoke to each other, even though he was infuriating her at the moment. "If she's really that much of a hassle, I'll keep an eye on her but that's it. I won't stop her from making friends." Hope told him. He sighed but nodded as he looked down at the hand on his bicep and Hope chuckled before taking it off however Billy turned around to face her again, pinning her against the broken video game. "What are you doing to me?" He breathed as his hands grazed her thighs under the skirt of her dress. He pulled her legs up so she was wrapped around his waist and he leaned her against the game and kissed her, holding her lower back so she could not fall. Hope tangled her hands in his hair and pushed her body against his as the kiss deepened. He started to trail kisses down her neck when the door to the staff room opened, "Break times..." Keith started but stopped when he saw the two tangled up in each other. Billy's back was towards the door, but Hope could see Keith clearly as she snapped her eyes open at the sound of his voice, removing her lips from Billy's and glaring at Keith. "Shit..." Billy complained before letting Hope down easily. Hope wiped at her mouth as Billy turned to also glare at Keith. Hope saw Dustin over Keith's shoulder, behind the counter trying to negotiate free coins with Keith because the machine ate theirs. His mouth was hanging open, staring at his sister with wide eyes. Billy looked back at Hope before he pushed past Keith who was shaking his head at the two. "Come on Max, we're leaving." Billy called to the girl with flaming red hair who had been talking to Lucas Sinclair. Hope, who pulled the skirt of her dress back down, sheepishly walked out of the staff room avoiding any eye contact with Keith and Dustin. "What the hell Hope?" Keith asked her and Hope sighed. "You're on duty!" He added and Hope scoffed, "Come on Keith, don't make out like I'm the only person that has ever done that in that room!" Hope stated, pointing to the room behind them. Keith frowned, "Not under my watch." He told her and Hope looked down at her hands guiltily again before looking up seeing Dustin still staring at her. "Here!" She gave him some free coins to Keith's annoyance and Dustin frowned at the coins before taking them in his hands and shaking his head and walking back to his friends.

Dustin and his friends left the arcade a few minutes before Hope had ended her shift. She drove home that night thinking of Billy and their conversation and wondered what he meant when he had said that Max's problems ended up being his problems. As she drove into the driveway a little after seven o'clock, she saw her mom coming out of the house. "Where are you going?" Hope asked her and her mom smiled sadly, "Mews has been missing all day, Dustin informed me she was spotted in Loch Nora so I'm going to go look for her." Hope handed her mom the car keys. "Should I come with?" Hope asked and Claudia shook her head. "Look after Dusty, I'll be home soon." She stated and took the keys and headed to the car. Hope opened the door to the lounge and saw Dustin standing by the phone, he was talking on his walkie talkie trying to reach his friends. "Is anyone there? We have a code red." He started but stopped when he heard Hope close the door behind her. "Code red?" Hope asked. "Okay, don't be mad at me." Dustin said to Hope who walked towards Dustin, "I found this creature in our trash on Halloween..." Dustin told Hope who frowned but continued to listen. "I thought it was a new discovery..." He continued and Hope shot her head towards Dustin's bedroom when she heard the screech. Hope's steps took her to Dustin's room while he was still babbling on about the creature he had found. Hope opened his door and cried out when she saw the creature behind the chair, chomping on Mew's corpse, blood pooling onto Dustin's carpet. "Dustin!" Hope cried out and smacked him over the head and he groaned, "Ow!" He complained and grabbed at the spot that had taken the blow. Hope shoved Dustin out the room and she closed the door. "What the hell is that thing?" Hope cried out eyes widened in terror. "I think it's a baby Demogorgon." Dustin said, nodding his head as Hope stared back at the room.

Her scar throbbing profusely through her leather jacket.

7. Code Red

Summary for the Chapter:

The siblings trap Dart, the darkness creeps in on Hope, Hope gets asked on a date, and Steve Harrington helps the siblings out...

Chapter 7 - Code Red

Hope dialled the police department's number from the phone hanging on the wall as she watched Dustin try to reach his friends via the walkie talkie. "Mike, we have a code red, I repeat, a code red." Dustin was saying when Florence who was the chief of police's secretary answered on the other line that Hope was calling from. "Hello, Flo speaking." She spoke into the receiver and Hope cleared her throat, "Hey Flo, It's Hope Henderson here, is the chief in?" Hope asked, casually and Hope heard Florence groan on the other end, "No he's not, I have no idea where he is, I think he clocked out for the evening!" Florence informed Hope who nodded to herself. "Thanks, I'll relay the message that you're looking for him." Florence added before she hung up the phone. "Chief Hopper isn't available." Hope told Dustin who was opening a cupboard that held his hockey gear that their mom had bought him once upon a time but was never used. "Shit, none of the party are answering either." Dustin confirmed to Hope who frowned. "We need to get this thing out of the house!" Hope cried while chewing on the skin of her thumb. "That's what this is for." He said, gesturing towards the stick. "I saw some lunch meat in the fridge, we can lure Dart outside to the storm cellar." Dustin added and Hope nodded at the plan. "Okay, okay... then what?" Hope asked and Dustin frowned, "I can't think of everything Hope, let's just do this and then we'll see from there..." He told her, his tone laced with frustration and Hope frowned at him this time, watching him go grab the meat from the fridge. Hope stood by his bedroom door while Dustin laid the lunch meat on the carpet in a straight line leading out the front door to the outside storm cellar. "DONE!" Dustin called out from the front door. "Okay, I'm going to open the door now, prepare to run!" Hope called back and she turned the doorknob on Dustin's door and dashed down the

hallway, almost pushing Dustin down the porch steps as they both headed for the shed opposite the storm cellar. Dustin slammed the door when they were both in the shed. "Ready?" Hope asked her younger brother, pointing at the hockey stick, Dustin's eyesight averted away from the front of the house as he stared at the hockey stick Hope was holding up, he nodded and took the stick from her and turned his gaze back to the house when the creature made an appearance on the porch, gobbling up the meat on his way. The creature hopped down the steps with ease, taking in each mouthful of meat that was left for it.

"Come on Dart..." Dustin egged on his newfound pet and Hope looked down at him, "You named it Dart?" She asked him, eyebrows nearly disappearing into her hair and he nodded before shushing her as Dart faced its back to the teenagers, inspecting some of the lunch meat that was right outside the storm cellar. Hope's scar throbbed even worse than before. She pressed her thumb down on it trying to ease the pain, but it persisted, almost becoming as bad as the day before when she saw the shadow over the middle school. She gasped as the pain increased and Dart spun its head in their direction. Dustin's head whipped around to Hope who was squeezing onto her left arm. Dustin looked back to Dart who had started galloping towards the shed. Dustin let out a warrior cry before he burst open the door, holding the hockey stick and hitting Dart, like a hockey ball, down the storm cellar steps. Dustin slammed the doors closed and locked them. He was lying on the doors, "Sorry, but you ate our cat." He whispered to Dart but then he remembered his sister in the shed. He rushed back to the shed and cried out "Shit!" when he saw Hope's scar, she had slid the sleeve of her leather jacket up her arm and was staring at it, horrified. There were three or four small black veins, about five centimetres long, protruding from the scar itself. It had not opened like yesterday, but the black veins were wriggling from the scar like worms. "Hope?" Dustin spoke to his sister, to see if she was still there with him. Hope looked up and Dustin backed away into one of the walls of the shed, noticing her eyes were dark and wide and just staring but just as quickly as they had turned black she blinked and the green was back, brighter than ever and the veins were gone.

Dustin stared at her in shock and Hope blinked a couple of times

before she shook her head, clearing her foggy mind. "Did you trap him?" Hope asked Dustin, acting as if nothing had happened while shifting her sleeve back down to her wrist. She got up from her crouching position and Dustin stared at her, maybe he had just imagined what had happened? "He's in the cellar." Dustin said, his eyes darting towards Hope's left arm. Hope caught him staring at it, but she decided to ignore his worried looks and walked out of the shed.

Dustin and Hope decided to wait until the next morning to try and do something about Dart. They were glad that he was trapped in the storm cellar since they knew he could not get out. Hope, who had little sleep, walked into Dustin's room the next morning after throwing on a pair of washed out jeans, combat boots and a white oversized t-shirt with her curls in a ponytail. She did not knock but she found Dustin awake and staring at the corner of the room where they both knew Mews' body lay in a pool of blood. "I'm going to go over to Mike's to see if anyone is there." Dustin told Hope who nodded. The Henderson siblings waltzed into the kitchen to find a note from their mom. "Gone to Loch Nora again, will be back later." Hope sighed in relief. "I'll clean up your room..." Hope said with a short nod and Dustin grimaced. "and I'll bury Mews in the back yard." Hope added before disappearing into the kitchen to get the cleaning supplies. "I'll be back with help!" Dustin called out and Hope heard the door close behind him as he was trying to contact the others again.

Hope scrubbed down Dustin's carpet removing the blood as she scrubbed harder. She wiped at her forehead as the sweat droplets started to form. When she was done cleaning, she grabbed a black bag and carefully put Mews' lifeless, bloody body into it and took it outside into the back yard. As she started digging a small grave with the shovel which she found in the shed, she heard the familiar sound of the blue Camaro's engine roar down her street. Hope poked her head over the tall, wooden picket fence while leaning on the shovel which was digging into the grass and her eyes spotted the car parking in her driveway and Billy was getting out of it. "Shit!" Hope cursed to herself as she looked back at the plastic bag. She dropped the shovel and jogged into the house, forgetting about the rubber gloves she had

on and the blood stain that had appeared on her white shirt from the cleaning. She reached the door just as Billy rang it and she waited a few seconds before she opened it. "Hey." He said to her, tilting his head to the left as he eyed out her choice of outfit. "Hey." Hope breathed out. "How do you know where I live?" She asked him, noticing his eyes drift over to the rubber gloves she was still wearing. She hastily took them off and placed them on the nearby kitchen counter. "I went to drop Max off at the arcade hoping you'd be there, but you weren't so that Keith guy gave me your address, said he'd prefer we do our business elsewhere." Billy said with a chuckle and a shake of his head. "Aren't you worried that Max is hanging out with my weirdo brother and his friends, surely you should be keeping an eye on her if I'm not at work right now?" Hope asked him sarcastically and Billy's facial expression darkened. "I thought we sorted that out?" Billy asked, his perfect eyebrow raised in confusion. Hope's butterflies which had been relatively quiet suddenly came to life and Hope looked away from him. "Are you going to invite me in?" He asked, stepping forward suddenly and Hope backed away, looking to the back door where she knew she still had to bury Mews, and spoke in a quick, even tone to not raise suspicion. "Not right now, my brother will be back any second..." She told him and he rolled his eyes taking another step forward. "I'm sure he could learn a few things from us, don't you?" Billy asked, his eyes trailing down Hope's body, flirtation seeping through his words as he spoke. His eyes landed on the blood stain on Hope's shirt and she looked down and immediately covered it with her arms. "I'm kind of busy at the moment." Hope told him, but all she really wanted to do was climb him like a tree. He took a step closer and Hope felt the warmth radiating from his body. "Can we meet up later then?" He asked her, Hope was taken aback by his directness. "I can pick you up since I now know where you live?" He asked, his smirk turning into a genuine smile. Hope thought about it for a minute, she knew Dustin would be back soon with whoever he could find to help them with Dart and she needed to get Billy out of her house so she could finish what she was meant to do. "Like a date?" Hope asked and Billy shrugged, "I don't do dates but if that's what you want to call it, sure?" He ended and Hope smirked back at him, the butterflies in her stomach were doing circus tricks which made her feel dizzy. "So, I'll pick you up at seven o'clock?" He asked, backing away to leave. Hope's eyes darted to the clock on the wall in the lounge, it was

eleven o'clock now, hopefully they will sort this whole Dart mess by that time, so Hope decided to agree. "Sure. Seven o'clock." She said with a nod as Billy turned around and walked out the still open door. "See you later." Billy said as Hope waved him goodbye. She closed the door when she heard the engine start and ran to the backyard to finish burying their mothers' dead cat.

Once Hope was done, she hovered by the grave while she smoked a quick cigarette before Dustin got back but he was back sooner than later so she had to stomp half her cigarette out into the sand and headed into the house where she was met by Dustin and Steve who was holding his nail bat from last year. "Steve?" Hope asked and Dustin looked up at his sister and nodded, "I found him at the Wheeler's, apparently Mike went to Will's last night but never came home and Nancy stayed at some girls house." Dustin told Hope who nodded but was still staring at Steve and his bat. "Steve is the next best thing I could come up with and besides, he still has the nail bat which could come in handy." Dustin advised, beaming up at Steve who was looking at Hope. "What is that?" Steve questioned, pointing to the stain on Hope's shirt. Hope looked down at it and sighed, "This thing that Dustin calls Dart ate our moms cat Mews, so I had to bury her in the garden." She told Steve who gulped "So, you ready for this?" Hope asked Steve as the siblings led him to the storm cellar in the front garden. "Guys, if this is some sort of prank?" Steve asked staring at the two Henderson's who looked at each other. "I wish it was, trust me." Hope sighed and beckoned for Dustin to open the doors to the cellar.

Steve went down first, followed by Hope who held a flashlight. "Uh, I'll stay up here in case he tries to escape." Dustin slowly said, looking around carefully. Hope rolled her eyes, as she continued to follow Steve down the stairs. Once the two were down in the storm cellar Steve spoke, "I don't see anything, do you?" He asked, turning to where Hope was illuminated by the flashlight. Hope shone the torch to where she knew the light hanging from the ceiling would be and pulled the switch. It was surprisingly dark in the storm cellar and the two teenagers' eyes adjusted to the light and Steve whistled when he saw the gooey, moulted skin and picked it up with the end of his bat. Dart was nowhere to be seen and Hope gasped at the sight on the end of the bat. "GUYS, IS EVERYTHING OK?" Dustin called from the

top of the stairs. "Get down here!" Hope ordered her brother who stumbled down the stairs. "Oh shit!" Dustin swore when he saw what Hope and Steve were looking at. Hope bent down and saw the tunnel that Dart had dug through the wall, she shone the torch down the tunnel which went on and on and Hope could not see the end of it. "He must've moulted again." Dustin spoke as they walked back up the stairs.

"So, what now?" Hope asked the two boys who looked at each other and then back at Hope and shrugged.

8. The Junkyard

Summary for the Chapter:

Hope finds out some disturbing news about Billy. Dart is lured to the junkyard but he is not alone. The darkness consumes Hope.

Chapter 8 – The Junkyard

Hope, Steve, and Dustin gathered in the kitchen of the Henderson household after discovering that Dart had escaped. “WE HAVE A CODE RED!” Dustin yelled into the walkie talkie. “WHY CAN’T I GET HOLD OF ANYONE?” He yelled again, taking off his hat and pulling at his curly mop of hair in frustration, Hope rolled her eyes at his theatrical antics and turned back to face Steve. “Do you, uh, wanna change?” Steve asked Hope, pointing towards the blood stain. Hope nodded and looked down towards the stain. “Poor Mews.” She stated sadly, shaking her head, and turned to walk towards her room. She figured she may as well throw on a nice top and some perfume if she was meeting Billy later. “An outfit change, really?” Dustin complained staring at his sister with an annoyed expression forming on his face “I can’t walk around with cat blood on my clothes Dustin, people will ask questions!” Hope informed him with a shrug. Dustin’s walkie talkie crackled, and a young girls’ voice was heard on the other end. “Hello?” Dustin spoke into the receiver and the girl spoke, “Could you shut up with your whining?” She asked, attitude gripping to her words. “Erica?” Dustin asked, “Hmmm?” Erica spoke again and Hope and Steve watched as the two exchanged words. “Is Lucas there I have a ...” Dustin started but Erica interrupted him, “A code red? Yeah, I heard.” She said to him and Dustin frowned this time even though Erica could not see it. “I need to speak to Lucas.” Dustin informed her again, more urgently this time. “It’s urgent!” He added to show her he means business. “I don’t really care so...” Erica responded, and Dustin cleared his throat, hurriedly. “Erica this is really urgent so if Lucas is there you need to tell him I have a code red!” Dustin informed her again and he heard Erica sigh out of boredom. “Well, I have a code for you instead, it’s called code shut-your-mouth!” Erica spoke and then the static crackled through the

radio and Dustin stared at the two older teens standing before him, shocked and a whole lot annoyed. "Well since we can't get hold of anyone at the moment the best thing for us to do is lure Dart away from the town." Steve spoke and Dustin and Hope looked back at him. "And how do you suppose we do that?" Dustin asked, eyebrows raised and staring from his sister to Steve. "Well, you lured Dart out of the house with lunch meat, why don't we get some other sort of meat and lure him like..." Hope paused, thinking hard of somewhere they could lure the monster too. "The junkyard" Dustin finished, and Hope and Steve looked at the younger teen and then to each other and nodded in agreement. "What kind of meat do you think Dart eats?" Steve asked and Hope and Dustin both frowned at him. "Well, he ate a cat so probably cow?" Dustin suggested with a smirk on his face. Hope chuckled and Steve frowned at the siblings. "Fine, cow it is, let's get to the butcher!" Steve said, grabbing his car keys and the nail bat before heading for the door, not in the mood for the Henderson humour especially when he only had to deal with one Henderson regularly now, he had to deal with both. Hope and Dustin glanced at each other and nodded and, Hope quickly scribbled a note to their mom advising her that they were at The Wheeler's before grabbing her leather jacket off the coat rack and leaving after Dustin.

Once inside Steve's car, driving to the butchery, the teenagers were quiet. Thinking about how they were going to capture Dart once they had lured him to the junkyard. At least Steve had his bat. "We can burn him, like Jonathan, Nancy and I were going to do with the Demogorgon last year?" Hope suggested to the two loudly over a complaining Dustin who she had shoved to the back seat when she got to the car as he was sitting in the front, grinning from ear to ear, now he was sitting in the back rambling on about the meaning of shotgun. Steve nodded next to her, "That could work." He said but Dustin who was now quiet, said nothing. "So, besides the meat, we need gasoline." Hope checked off and turned her head to Dustin who was still holding his radio. "Are you done being a baby and ready to help out, since this is your mess after all?" Hope asked her younger brother who rolled his eyes at her. "I think you guys have got it all figured out." He responded and Hope turned back to face the road before them and sighed and shook her head and Steve laughed. "Dustin, are you seriously fighting with your sister because she took the front seat?" Steve asked, turning his head slightly to the annoyed

teenager in the back but only slightly so he could keep his eyes on the road. "He'll get over it, I can see you're an only child, Dustin and I will fight over literally anything, well when we were younger, he just sulks now." Hope informed Steve who nodded casually but not before getting a look at Dustin through the rear-view mirror. Dustin had furrowed his brow and started fiddling with the knobs on the radio. "Where is everyone?" Dustin mumbled, talking into the radio again asking if anyone was available. "When I went to the Wheeler's, Mrs Wheeler said that Mike was at Will's, but no one is answering there, and Nancy was at some girls house." Hope scoffed and turned to her brother, "Nancy and Jonathan haven't been at school since the day after Halloween. Who knows where they are!" She told her brother who looked up, surprised. Steve cleared his throat, and the two siblings turned their heads in his direction, "Here we are!" He stated, pulling into an open parking spot, and stopping just outside the butcher. "Who's going to do the explaining?" Steve asked, while getting out of the car. Dustin's eyes darted from Hope to Steve and then back again. Hope just stared at Steve. "You do realize this is your mess though, right?" He asked Dustin, pointing an index finger at him. Dustin nodded, sheepishly, looking down at his feet.

Once they had spoken to the butcher and requested the two buckets of chopped meat some eyebrows were raised but no questions were asked. Steve, Hope and Dustin made their way back to the house where they decided to park Steve's car before making their way to the junkyard on foot. Dustin's radio crackled and Lucas's voice was heard through the static. "Dustin?" Lucas called and Dustin dropped the bucket of meat, that he had taken out of the car, with a loud thump. He clicked the button on his radio and spoke, "Well, well, where the hell have you been?" Dustin asked Lucas, Steve and Hope continued what they were doing which was trying to shove the gasoline in Dustin's school backpack which they had got from the house when they got back from getting the meat, along with other things, including snacks which Dustin said was mandatory. "My stupid sister turned it off..." Lucas moaned, and Dustin rolled his eyes. "Well, when you were having sister problems, Dart grew again, and we think he might be a baby Demogorgon." Dustin informed Lucas who was quiet. "Is this really necessary?" Hope called to Dustin, waving around the three musketeers bars wrapped in plastic wrap. Dustin rolled his eyes at his sister before continuing to talk to

Lucas, "Meet us at the old junkyard and bring your binoculars and wrist rocket." Dustin informed Lucas, "Who's we?" Lucas asked, "My sister and Steve Harrington." Dustin advised Lucas while he watched Hope shove the chocolate nougat bar into the backpack. "Come on, let's go!" Steve called to Dustin who picked up the one bucket of meat, "Steve Harrington?" Lucas questioned but Dustin spoke over him "Over and out." Dustin then turned the dial on the radio before watching Hope put the backpack over her shoulder.

The trio walked along the train track which had not been used in years. Dustin and Steve plopped meat along the ground as they went. Hope's scar was throbbing more than usual. She realized it was since they found Dart that it had not stopped throbbing and her mind started to wonder to what happened last year when the Demogorgon had scratched her and the pain she felt then, it was almost as great as the pain she had felt the day she saw the shadow hovering above Will on the field. She thought about the fear in Billy's eyes when he saw her scar being ripped open however she was brought back to reality when she heard Dustin tell Steve about why he kept Dart and Steve telling Dustin that the trick to getting girls is acting like you do not care and the fact that he uses Faberge hair products and Farah Fawcett hair spray. Hope stopped and turned to glare at Steve, "Please don't give my baby brother advice on how to get girls..." Hope scolded Steve who looked up after plopping down some more of the raw meat. Dustin rolled his eyes at Hope, "I feel like you're the one who needs advice on the company they keep." Dustin responded to Hope as they continued to walk, and Hope's cheeks flushed, crimson. Dustin was obviously referencing Billy and the fact that he had seen Hope and Billy in a compromising position. Steve did not need to know about Billy and Hope at this moment. "What are you talking about man, your sister hangs around some of the best people in Hawkins..." Steve interrupted, pointing at himself and laughing, and Dustin scoffed, "You don't look like the type of someone who tries to run little kids over as a joke." Dustin advised Steve, eyeballs tearing through Hope's as Hope's facial expression changed to confusion. "Excuse me?" Hope asked Dustin, through gritted teeth, stopping in her tracks making Steve and Dustin stop too. "Just saying..." Dustin added with a shrug, now trying to change the conversation, realizing he probably should not have said anything in the first place, seeing his sister's eye's flash to darkness. Steve's eyes

darted from Hope who was staring at Dustin with a hard expression on her face and to Dustin who was staring at the meat bucket, grabbing a new handful. "He did what?" Hope pressed on, teeth still gritted, staring at Dustin. Steve had no idea who they were speaking about, but he did not think this was the right time or place since they still had Dart to worry about and they were nearing the junkyard. He could see Hope getting angrier every second that passed that Dustin kept quiet. "Dustin!" Hope cried out, throwing her hands in the air in exasperation. Dustin looked up quickly, "What did he do?" Hope asked, eyes dark and glaring at Dustin, not mentioning any names but both siblings knowing exactly who they were speaking about. Dustin shook his head and pointed in the direction ahead of them changing the subject, "We're nearly there!" He exhaled in relief and started walking past his sister a little too quickly for Hope's liking. "Chill." Steve pointed at Hope who watched as Dustin walked up the embankment and into a clearing, disappearing from their line of vision. Steve jogged after Dustin, plopping some more meat down on the ground, leaving Hope seething with anger. Had Billy Hargrove tried to run over Dustin and his friends? The thought running through her mind as she made her way up the hill and hearing Lucas yell, "I SAID MEDIUM WELL!"

Hope looked towards the broken-down bus and saw Lucas on his bike with Max, Billy's sister, standing up on the back of it, her fiery red hair blowing in the wind. "Who's that?" Steve asked Dustin, looking from Dustin to the other teenagers and then back again, seeing Dustin's face drop. "No one..." Dustin responded before shaking his head and walking over to Lucas. Hope watched as Dustin dragged Lucas away from Max and they crouched low behind some sort of barrel. Max smiled at Steve and Hope and Steve and Hope looked from each other and back to Max. "I'm Max..." She introduced herself to Steve and smiled at Hope, "We've already met?" Max reminded Hope who nodded and looked back at Dustin and Lucas who were whisper arguing. "How did you guys meet?" Steve asked the two girls while Hope tried to get Lucas and Dustin's attention without making it obvious. "The arcade..." Hope quickly responded, giving Max a look that stated do-not-say-another-word. Max nodded and smiled, rolling her eyes at Hope.

Once they started boarding up the bus, a safe place for them to hide

out when Dart arrived on the scene. Steve had to first scold Dustin and Lucas for bickering about Lucas bringing Max before they could start doing anything. Once the bus was boarded up securely with sheets of metal and wood they had found lying around and Max had found a ladder that they could use to climb up to the top of the bus to keep a look out for Dart. Once they were inside the bus after dropping the remainder of the meat in the clearing the teenagers waited for something to happen. The sun had disappeared, and darkness had come fairly quickly. Hope had forgotten about her date with Billy, especially after what Dustin had told her what he did to the kids, the anger had subsided, but her scar was starting to act up again as an eerie fog loomed over the junkyard. Hope rummaged in the backpack and brought out her box of cigarettes she had stuffed in the front pocket and lit one with the lighter Steve was flicking on and off. She stuck her head out of the door of the bus and blew the smoke once she had inhaled. Dustin frowned at her before turning to Max who had asked Steve if they had really fought one of the creatures before. Steve had just nodded, and Dustin snapped at Max when she asked if they are sure it was not a bear or something... "If you don't believe us then why did you come?" He questioned her before she rolled her eyes and climbed the ladder to sit with Lucas who was keeping a look out.

Hope threw the cigarette butt out of the bus faraway from the gasoline they had poured onto the grass from the meat pile and closed the door before sitting on the ladder and hearing Max talk to Lucas about her life in California and why Billy was so angry all the time and that he sometimes took his anger out on her. Hope chewed on the skin of her thumb, well what was left, and heard Max tell Lucas she did not know why she was telling him all the stuff about her life. Hope felt the need to listen to Max while she spoke about Billy and even though Hope seemed to believe what Max was saying she felt like she was drawn to Billy even more for some odd reason, even though she was still pissed off with Billy after finding out what he did to Dustin and the rest she realized she was already sort of forgiving him. It was crazy to her and she felt frustrated about it, but she could not stop her intense feelings that she felt for him when they were together, they did not know each other in the slightest but Hope felt like she needed to get to know him and it scared her for how intense her feelings towards him were. She shook her head to herself,

embarrassed at herself for feeling this way.

Hope closed her eyes as she tried to stop thinking about Billy, but her scar started to throb incredulously as Lucas yelled from the top of the bus. "I've got eyes, 10 0 clock!" Hope, Dustin, and Steve dashed to the windows of the bus and stared through the gaps of the sheets of metal and planks of wood that they obviously had not secured tightly enough. "I can't see him" Dustin spoke, quietly, and Steve pointed to an opening in the fog where Dart was slowly making his way towards the meat. Hope's scar burned as she locked what she thought was eyes with the creature. She pressed her index and middle fingers down on the scar tightly, and she closed her eyes, the pain subsided a little but when she opened her eyes again and looked down at her scar those same vines were back, protruding from the scar which was pulsing a little. "Why isn't he taking the bait?" Dustin asked and Steve shrugged. "Probably tired of cow..." Steve stated before getting up and grabbing the bat and walking past Dustin, not noticing what was happening to Hope who was next to Dustin "Be ready." Steve said as he threw the lighter at Dustin and swung the door of the bus open and retreated down the steps. Max stumbled down the stairs quickly, "What is he doing?" She cried. "Expanding the menu." Dustin responded and the two teenagers watched Steve taunt the creature. Hope gasped as the pain increased in her arm and Dustin and Max turned their heads in her direction. "Are you okay?" Max asked her, staring at the now visible scar and Hope shook her head but did not say anything. The pain was like stepping on a piece of glass and the glass stabbing the skin multiple times before setting on a place in the skin. Her eyes began to water, and she looked up at Dustin and Max before Lucas yelled from the top. "STEVE, WATCH OUT!" "A little busy here!" Steve called and Lucas shouted again, "THREE O CLOCK!" Lucas cried and Dustin spun his head back to the clearing and saw another creature like Dart sitting on top of an old, abandoned car. "SHIT!" Dustin screamed. He dashed past Hope and tore the bus door open, "STEVE, ABORT, ABORT!" He called out and Steve turned around and started running back to the bus not before he got a good swing and hit of one of the creatures.

Steve slammed the bus door just as one of the creatures banged its body against it. All of the creatures had started to slam against the side of the bus. Dustin tried to pull Hope up off the floor as Steve got

the bat ready to swing at any moment. "IS ANYONE THERE, GOD ANYONE?" Dustin cried into his walkie talkie as Hope was still slumped on the ground holding her scar, almost as if she were no longer comprehending what was happening in the moment. "WE ARE AT THE OLD JUNKYARD AND WE ARE GOING TO DIE!" Dustin cried again as the bangs got louder and forceful and a creature was now on the roof of the bus.

BANG, BANG, BANG.

Max who was standing at the end of the ladder, ready to climb up it, screamed when she saw the creature appear at the hole in the roof on top of the bus and Steve pushed her out of the way. "WANT SOME OF THIS?" He yelled at the creature which had opened its flower petal mouth and showed its hundreds of teeth while it screeched. Just as Steve was about to smash the monster with the bat it stopped screeching and turned what you would call its head in the other direction and stared into the distance before hurtling down off the bus and disappearing along with the others.

Silence.

The party looked around at each other. Dustin dashed to Hope who was still crouched low, but the pain seemed to subside. She blinked and looked up at Dustin who sighed in relief. "What happened?" She asked, looking around at the shaking children and then at Steve who had opened the bus door carefully and was peering out into the darkness. "We were just attacked by some..." Max started to say but she did not know what to call them. She looked at Hope, confusion filling her face. "Wait, you really don't know what just happened?" Max asked her and Hope's gaze found Dustin's and she frowned, "I can't remember, I think I blacked out?" Hope questioned, getting up from her position and looking around for Steve who had exited the bus with Lucas. Dustin and Max stared at each other with worried looks on their faces. "Whatever happens to you seems to happen when something from the upside down is either attacking or in close proximity." Dustin started but Hope waved him off as she also exited the bus. "Do you think you scared them off?" Lucas was asking Steve who turned around and looked at Hope once she joined them. "Everything okay?" Steve asked her, he had noticed that she had froze when the attack started but he was supposed to protect the kids

so he could not assist her at that moment. She nodded as Dustin and Max joined the party outside. Dustin's eyes kept darting in Hope's direction, just to make sure she was actually okay. "I don't think I scared them off..." Steve started and looked back at the party after his gaze scanned the junkyard one more time to make sure they were indeed alone.

"I think they're going somewhere!" Steve ended, swinging his bat over his shoulder, staring at shocked facial expressions.

9. The Spy

Summary for the Chapter:

We get a little peek into Billy's life and the party finally reunite and find out what has happened to Will and how Hope is connected.

Notes for the Chapter:

Mostly cannon with a few adjustments from here on out until we get to The Snow Ball.

Chapter 9 - The Spy

As Billy got ready for his, whatever it was, with Hope that evening, he thought of all the things he liked about her. He liked that she did not try too hard to fit in. He liked that she was a little bit feisty, after their brief conversation at the arcade he could see it in her, but he wanted to get to know her even more, he almost felt like he needed to get to know her more and he was fucking going to do it, and no one would stop him. He did not care that Carol and Tommy had told him about Hope's past. Hell, it even excited him a little bit more. The chick who was nearly mauled by an animal but came out of it alive, at least she was a survivor that was one thing he figured she and him had in common – they both survived monsters in their lives. He kind of admired her for it. What frightened him about the entire situation though was the fact that she seemed to feel the same pull and attraction to him than he did for her. He did not understand it he just knew by instinct that he needed to get to know her more and it frustrated him that every time he was getting to know her more, they were interrupted.

Billy was a sexual being. He knew sex as a way of expressing himself and he did it well. He could feel the way Hope pressed herself against him every time they had hooked up that she was into him. He knew tonight he would be able to take it further with her because they would not be interrupted, he would make sure of it, and he could feel that she wanted him just as much as he wanted her. The chemistry was inevitable.

Billy took a drag of his cigarette and fluffed up his curls and smirked at himself in the mirror as he blew the smoke out. He straightened out his red shirt and left the first few buttons undone. He put the last of his cigarette out and sprayed his cologne, one spray into the front of his jeans for good measure. He grabbed his leather jacket but was interrupted when his bedroom door swung open with force.

"Where is Maxine?" His father asked, tilting his head to the left. "She should be in her room?" Billy questioned, shrugging on his leather jacket before grabbing the box of cigarettes on his bedside table. "Well, we just went into her room and it's empty and the window is open." Neil Hargrove responded to his son whose face dropped a little. "Maybe... She..." He stammered, "Went to the arcade or something, I don't know?" Billy found his words and shot back at his father who scoffed, "You don't know?" He asked, his tone drenched in anger. "I'm sure she's fine." Billy responded, looking at his father. "You were supposed to watch her." His dad reminded Billy who frowned. "I have been watching her, all week! She's thirteen years old for god's sake, she shouldn't need a full-time babysitter." Billy growled, growing frustrated with the situation his father was putting him in. Billy moved to walk around his father who side stepped in front of him. "Where do you think you're going?" His father asked, through gritted teeth. "I can't help it that you guys are three hours late, I have a date to get too." Billy responded, knowing all too well that he was riling up his father even more, but he did not care at this point, he just wanted to get out of there. "Is that why you've been staring at yourself in the fucking mirror instead of watching your sister?" Neil's voice had risen, and he stepped toward his son who frowned. Billy's voice dropped low, so low it was barely audible what his next words were, "She's not my sister." Neil heard it though and shoved his son against the wall. A squeak of shock had emitted from Susan, but she did not stop what happened next. Neil punched Billy in the side of his stomach, hitting his ribs which made Billy double over but before Billy could react Neil held his son by the throat and shoved him against the wall again. "What did we talk about?" Neil asked Billy who grunted at the pain that Neil had inflicted on him just seconds before. His eyes had started to water as the strength of Neil's hand on his throat deepened. "What did we talk about." Another shove and Billy stared into his father's eyes, "Respect and responsibility." Billy choked out and his father released Billy whose

feet thudded on the ground and he coughed violently as the air flowed back into his lungs. "That's correct. Now apologize to Susan." Neil demanded and stared at Billy disappointedly. "I'm sorry Susan." Billy called out to the red headed woman standing motionless at the door frame. He clutched at his ribs as he said it. "It's okay Neil, really." Susan responded quietly staring, wide eyed, at Billy who was still staring at his father. "None of his behaviour is okay Susan, now he's going to call whatever whore he is seeing tonight and cancel their date and he is going to go look for his sister like the good, kind and respectful brother that he is, isn't that right Billy?" Neil said, his condescending words burning through Billy like a bullet. "Yes Sir." Billy told Neil quietly. Neil pointed his finger at him, "What, I couldn't hear you?" He asked and Billy sighed and raised his voice a little louder to satisfy his father, "Yes Sir!" Billy ended and Neil nodded and ushered Susan out of the room before slamming the door behind him. Billy clutched at his ribs and pain seared through his body and the tears started to fall out of his eyes. He wiped at them furiously before standing up, grabbing his keys, and walking out of his door. He forgot to cancel his date with Hope because he was too angry with Max at the moment to think about anything else.

The party walked back the same way they had come to the junkyard once they realized the coast was clear and safe. Dustin eyed out his sister a couple of times before coming to terms with the fact that she was fine and thought that maybe she had blacked out because she was scared? That is all he could do for her now since they had more pressing matters to get to – like finding Dart. "Are you sure that was Dart?" Lucas asked Dustin who nodded. "He had a yellow pattern on his butt. The same one Dart had." Dustin responded to Lucas who was frowning. "But he was tiny two days ago?" Lucas questioned again and Dustin sighed, "Well he moulted three times already." "MalTED?" Steve asked and Hope laughed, "Moulted, like shed skin to make room for growth." Hope informed Steve. "Ah, I see, that's disgusting." Steve said and Hope nodded in agreement. "That what that skin was in our cellar." Hope told Steve who nodded. "What skin, what cellar?" Lucas rounded on Hope, "You said you couldn't find Dart that day at the school." Lucas shot back at Dustin and Dustin frowned at Hope, her eyes widened. She had not realized that Dustin had lied to his friends about keeping the creature. "When will

he moult again?" Max asked, ignoring Dustin and Lucas's bickering. "Gotta be soon." Dustin responded with a nod. "And he's going to eat a whole lot more than cats." Hope told them with a serious nod and Lucas stopped walking. Dustin rolled his eyes at Hope, sighed, and stopped with Lucas who was glaring at Dustin. "A cat, Dart ate a cat?" His voice was shrill, and his hands were flailing about. "No...!" Dustin said shaking his head, shooting daggers at his sister who had pursed her lips knowing she had blown his cover. Steve stared at Dustin, confused. "What are you talking about, he ate Mews?" Steve confirmed and Max interrupted the conversation this time, "Who's Mews?" She frowned and Lucas blew up. "It's their cat!" He cried, hands still flailing, voice an octave higher. Hope rolled her eyes and dug in the backpack for her box of smokes. After retrieving one she lit it with Steve's lighter and inhaled deeply while the boys bickered about breaking the rule of law. "You broke the rule of law!" Lucas frowned at Dustin and glared back at him, "So did you!" He declared pointing at Max. "What?" Lucas asked, confused. "You told a stranger the truth!" Dustin reminded Lucas who stared at Max who had a small frown on her face. "A stranger?" She mused, staring at the two boys who continued to bicker.

Hope and Steve were staring out into the woods after Steve had heard the growling. The boys were still bickering. "Guys?" Steve said to them, waving his hand at them to get their attention but they still bickered. Hope stomped on her cigarette as her eyes adjusted to the darkness of the woods and she listened intently. The familiar screeching in the distance. "GUYS!" Steve yelled, it shut them up. The party started to walk towards the sounds. "Wait, why are you guys walking towards the sound?" Max cried out and huffed in annoyance but followed the teens into the forest, anyway, not wanting to be left alone with those creatures roaming about. They finally came to the edge of a cliff that looked over Hawkins. Lucas, who's binoculars were strapped around his neck, lifted them up to gaze around the lazy town. The town that was unaware of the supernatural inhabitants that roamed the ground.

Hope nibbled on the skin of her thumb, tearing at a piece of skin that made her thumb start to bleed again. She sucked at the blood and sighed. She was feeling anxious. She jumped when Dustin spoke quietly. "I don't see him."

Growling and Screeching.

"It's the lab, they were going back home." Lucas said suddenly making Hope jump again. She frowned at Lucas who shrugged. Steve beckoned for the kids to follow him as he made his way to the lab and Hope sighed and looked at Max who also had a worried look on her face. "Does your brother know you're here?" Hope suddenly asked Max who looked at her, confused. Max shook her head and Hope sighed, "You know he'll probably murder me for sneaking out, but I just needed to see this for myself." Max stated and Hope nodded, understanding some what but also wanting to ask some more questions about Billy. The girls followed the boys through the thicket, tripping on branches and twigs and rocks laying about on the floor. "What happened back there, on the bus?" Max pressed and Hope paused. "Is it the same what happened that day on the field?" She added and Hope continued walking but was silent, not exactly knowing herself what was going on with her. "I got this from one of those creatures that they call a Demogorgon." Hope started to say, motioning her right hand to her left arm where the scar was pulsing slightly. Max nodded, "Lucas mentioned something like that when he was telling me about it all. I've heard from Billy that you were attacked by an animal?" Max said and Hope scoffed, "That is the story we had to tell because the government made us sign non-disclosure agreements, I'm not exactly sure what is happening with me, but I think it has something to do with the lab and those creatures." Hope informed Max who nodded and turned silent. They rounded into a clearing before Hope could say anything more and they heard familiar voices speaking up ahead. "Ssh." Dustin said, placing his index finger over his lips. "Hello?" The female voice called, obviously hearing the party's incoming footsteps and then a male voice spoke, "Nancy come on it's nothing." Hope looked at Steve and he looked back at her and both of them pushed past the kids and found themselves at the front gate of the lab, face to face with Jonathan and Nancy.

"Nancy?" Hope questioned and Nancy squinted in the darkness at her friend. "Hope?" She called and the two stared at each other for a moment. "Where the hell have you two been?" Hope asked, glaring at Jonathan who was now looking at Steve. "Steve? What are you two doing here?" Jonathan asked curiously. "Jonathan, what are you

doing here?" Dustin cried out running over to the group too. Lucas and Max trailing after. "We're looking for Mike and Will." Nancy responded to Dustin who looked at her, frowning. "They're not in there are they?" Lucas asked and Jonathan looked at the lab, "I don't know, why did you say it like that?" Jonathan asked and some screeching was heard as the lights flickered in the lab. "The powers off!" Nancy complained, "The gates locked, we can't get in!" She added and Hope shook her head, "I don't think you want to go in there Nance." Nancy looked at Hope, eyeing her out worriedly. "Are you okay, you don't look like yourself?" Nancy asked Hope, Steve had been listening to their conversation and looked at Hope now. Nancy was right, Hope did look different. The party had now gathered and were all looking at Hope who sighed and pushed back her leather jacket sleeve. The veins were squiggling around her scar and the part where her scar was usually white was now black. "How long has it been like that?" Jonathan cried, grabbing Hope's arm, and inspecting it. Dustin also approached and stared at her scar. "Since yesterday." He spoke, avoiding Hope's eye and looking at Jonathan. "Since the field." Hope corrected and the two stared at her, annoyed. "Why didn't you say anything?" Dustin scolded and Hope frowned at him, "Look, I didn't understand what was happening, I saw the shadow, I thought we all saw it..." Hope rambled, and Dustin, Lucas and Max looked back and forth at each other, confused as to what Hope was talking about. "What shadow?" Max finally asked. Hope stopped and turned her head to Max, "The shadow that was hovering over Will?" Hope spoke and Max shook her head, along with Dustin and Lucas. "We didn't see any shadow." They both said in unison. Jonathan cried out in frustration and dashed over to the security box and pressed the buttons, trying to open the gate. Dustin shoved Jonathan out of the way attempting to press the buttons too. "We need to see Dr Owens like right now!" Nancy cried out and her wish was granted as the gate started to slide open slowly. "I did it!" Dustin cried, gleefully "The power came back on dingus." Max replied and Dustin rolled his eyes at her. "You guys wait here we'll see what's going on." Jonathan called and hopped into his car with Nancy hopping into the passenger seat. They sped the car into the driveway of the lab and Hope stared after them.

Hope found herself walking towards the lab. She did not know why but she was drawn to it. She felt the similar pull to Billy, but this was

something dark. "Hope... Where are you going?" Steve called out after her as she increased her speed, but she halted when she saw the head lights of Jonathan's car heading towards her at a fast pace. She jumped out the way as they drove past, she saw Mrs Byers and Will and Mike in the back seat of the car. Chief Hopper drove by next and yelled at the kids to get into the car. Lucas, Dustin, and Steve shoved themselves in. "HOPE!" Max called to the older Henderson who was staring at the lab. Hope tore her eyes away from building and stared at Max who was beckoning for her to get into the car. "COME ON HENDERSON!" Chief Hopper yelled and Hope dragged her feet to the car. Max got into the back seat with the others and Hope climbed into the front seat. She was shaking and Hopper seemed to take notice.

"What's going on?" Dustin cried from the back and Hopper kept his one eye on Hope next to him who was shivering. "You alright kid?" He asked and Hope stared blankly out the window. She did not respond immediately. "Show him Hope!" Steve cried out and Hope's neck snapped to the back, glaring daggers at Steve. "Show me what?" Hopper asked and the others in the back urged her to show him. She slowly lifted her sleeve and Hopper frowned at the veins squirming around the scar which was now pitch black. "Will has been possessed." Hopper informed the kids, after he had taken a glance at the scar on Hope's arm. "That day in the field?" Hope asked suddenly making the others jump. "The shadow?" Hope continued and Hopper's eyes darted from the road to Hope. "What are you talking about?" He asked curiously, "Hope saw the shadow hovering over Will, she didn't tell any of us until just now..." Dustin advised Hope who nodded frantically. "What if some of the shadow went into Hope?" Lucas asked now, eyes glancing at Hope who was staring at Hopper. "The reason I didn't tell you about anything was because I didn't understand what was happening!" Hope growled at Dustin, ignoring Lucas's statement. Dustin frowned not understanding why Hope was getting mad at him but retaliating anyway, "You've been too busy making out with Max's brother to take note of anything happening with you!" He snapped back at Hope who turned her entire body, so she was facing the others in the back. She avoided any eye contact with Steve. "Hargrove?" Steve scoffed and stared at Hope and Dustin who were glaring at each other. "ENOUGH!" Hopper boomed at the two siblings "This ain't the time!" He added

and Hope slowly moved her body, so she was facing the front again and buried her head in her hands. "If I'd told someone sooner maybe we could have avoided all of this!" She said, words seeping frustration but muffled from her face being in her hands. "If it has gotten to you it is not as bad as Will, he got the brunt of it. He is practically a spy for that shadow that you saw. He led those creatures here and they uh... we lost Bob." Hopper ended and the car was silent. Hope sighed and stared out the window again. She knew that Jonathan's mom Joyce was seeing somebody. She had not really spent much time with Bob, but the way Jonathan had spoken about him she knew he had been a good match for Joyce. They arrived at the Byers house. Jonathan parked his car first then Hopper parked his truck. The kids scrambled out of the car and dashed into the house followed by Jim who immediately walked over to the landline. Joyce had vanished to her bedroom and the kids gathered in the lounge area where Jonathan had put Will on the couch. He was passed out, but Jonathan was soothingly rubbing Will's head apologizing to him for his absence.

Once Hopper had hung up his phone call with the government, he made his way to Joyce's bedroom leaving the kids who had started discussing Bob. "Do you know Bob was the founder of the AV Club?" Mike stated and the other boys and Max stared at him, amazed.

Hope watched the kids talk about Bob for awhile but decided she needed a breath of fresh air because she did not feel too good. Once outside Hope took a deep breath and breathed out but immediately felt dizzy. Steve joined her a few minutes later and watched as Hope collected her thoughts. "You're really hooking up with Hargrove?" He asked her and Hope sighed and rolled her eyes. "It was only three times Steve." Hope advised him and Steve scoffed, "Three times too many. You know he's been tormenting me since he got here right?" Steve asked her and Hope sighed. "I can't help my feelings Steve." Hope told him sternly and Steve frowned. "You have feelings now?" Steve asked her and Hope got up and headed back inside without answering him.

When Hope went back inside, Steve followed her aimlessly, waiting for her to respond to his previous question. Dustin and Mike were arguing over fighting the demogorgon's. "We can't just sit here and

do nothing!” Mike moaned and Dustin frowned, “We can’t fight those demo-dogs on our own we need serious backup!” Dustin explained and Max frowned and spoke up this time, “Demo-dogs?” She asked, confused. “Demogorgon, demo-dog – it’s like a compound, a play on words.” Dustin added and Max just shook her head and went back over to sit next to Lucas. “I mean, we could’ve fought it if it was just Dart but now there’s an army.” “What do you mean?” Steve asked this time and Mike looked up at him. “His army, maybe if we stop his army, we can stop him too!” Mike advised Steve who still looked confused. “The shadow monster!” Dustin advised Steve who seemed to understand now. “It got Will that day on the field. Dr Owens said it’s like a virus, it infected him.” Mike added. Dustin got up and grabbed Hope’s wrist and pulled him towards Mike, “Something like this.” He shoved Hope’s sleeve up ignoring her protests and Mike’s eyes grew wide. The veins were swirling around her skin. Hope frowned and Mike groaned, “I’m not as bad as Will, but I kind of black out if anything bad happens.” She informed the group not looking at any of them as all eyes were on her at this point. “How many times has this happened?” Hopper’s voice was heard as he emerged from the passageway leading to Joyce’s bedroom. Dustin recounted the times in his head, “Twice but when we were ambushed at the junkyard she literally froze up and couldn’t remember anything.” Dustin informed Hopper who nodded. Hope shrugged her sleeve back down her arm and yanked her arm out of Dustin’s grip and scowled at him.

“Remember what Mr Clark taught us about the hive mind, basically everything connected to the mind flayer is affected so if we try and stop the mind flayer it will stop everything, including the demo-dogs.” Mike reminded the boys and they nodded, “But it will also affect Will and possibly Hope.” Dustin added and they nodded again. “So, we need to try and get the mind flayer out of Will.” Dustin ended, he had grabbed a dungeons and dragons manual from Will’s room and had been explaining the shadow monster to the group. Hopper had grown frustrated and told them it was just a kid’s game, but it all seemed to make sense to the rest. “So, this mind flamer thing...” Nancy started, and Dustin rolled his eyes, “Flayer, mind flayer!” He corrected her and she rolled her eyes at him before continuing. “How do we get it out of Will?” She pressed and the group grew silent. “Firstly, we should ask what it wants.” Hope

interjected and the group looked over at her, she had been quiet since they got to the Byers. "To conquer us, basically, it believes it's the master race." Dustin told her and she nodded in understanding. "Like the Germans?" Steve asked now and Dustin scoffed, "You mean the Nazi's?" Dustin corrected Steve and added, "If the Nazi's were a race from another dimension then sure." He ended and Steve just nodded. "So basically, this thing is like a brain and it wants to take over everything. This could be the end of the world as we know it." Dustin added and Steve started to freak out. "Shit, well now what do we do?" He asked, running his hands through his hair, and looking around the group. "We kill the brain." Jonathan spoke now and everyone turned their heads in his direction. "We would win." He added and Dustin nodded. "So, how would we even kill this thing though, shoot it with fireballs?" Hopper asked and Dustin scoffed. Hope scowled at him and rolled her eyes at his I-know-everything attitude and Dustin's eyes flickered to the ground. "He'll know." Mike said now, motioning his head to Will who was still asleep on the couch. "I thought we couldn't trust him, that's why he's sedated, because he's a spy?" Max asked curiously even though Hope hinted confusion in her voice. "He can't spy if he doesn't know where he is though?" Mike responded and Hopper clapped his hands and walked out of the house towards the shed in the Byers garden.

He wrenched open the door and nodded. "This should work." He stated before grabbing the stuff that occupied the shed and throwing it all out onto the lawn.

10. Fight or Flight Part 1

Summary for the Chapter:

Hope goes into the void. They figure out a way to get Will back. A person from the party's past returns.

Chapter 10 – Fight or Flight – Part 1

The party helped Hopper clean out the shed and then proceeded to help disguise the shed so Will would not know where he was. Placing sheets from the beds inside the main house over the windows to taping up sheets of metal found in the pile of junk Hopper had chucked on the lawn.

Hope, Steve, and Nancy were assisting with putting one of the sheets up when Steve spoke to Nancy suddenly, “Did you know Hope’s been hooking up with Hargrove?” He asked and Hope rolled her eyes and frowned at Steve, “Why do you care so much?” Hope asked him through gritted teeth, frustration prominently clear in her words, and Nancy laughed, “Come on Steve it was one time relax...” She responded before Steve could respond to Hope. Steve’s eyes landed on Nancy and frowned, “Is that what she told you?” He asked and Nancy now looked over at Hope who had continued to frown at Steve and slapped him on the shoulder. “Seriously, why do you care so much?” Hope rounded back on to Steve and he looked at her, perplexed. “You’re supposed to be my friend, the guy’s been tormenting me since he got to Hawkins, I’d like to think there’s some loyalty to our friendship!” Steve advised Hope, her frown softened. “There were other times?” Nancy questioned, ignoring Steve’s statement and Hope turned her attention to Nancy. “Look, it’s not like that, you weren’t even here for me to tell you!” Hope shot back at Nancy, Hope felt like she was being ganged up on by her friends and this was not the time or place for this to happen, so she got defensive as the anger bubbled up in her stomach. “You’ve been off with Jonathan doing god knows what while your boyfriend sits around waiting for you, how fair is that?” She spat and Nancy looked shocked and then looked apologetically at Steve who was still frowning at Hope. “Hope, are you okay?” Steve asked her as he noticed her hands start shaking, he also noticed the whites of her

eyes darken. "I... I need air." Hope stammered, before pushing passed the two and heading for the fresh air outside.

She breathed deeply and exhaled. Her hands slowly stopped shaking but she did not feel like herself. She could not explain how she felt but she wondered, if she felt like this then how did Will feel? Hope decided to let Nancy and Steve finish up in the shed without her. She went back into the house and approached the sedated Will on the couch.

She sat on the edge of the couch and watched as he breathed peacefully. Hope's arm brushed against Will's slightly and she shuddered when the hair on her skin stood up. She suddenly decided to grip his hand and squeeze it, hoping for some sort of reaction, figuring she would not get any, but to her surprise she felt herself get sucked into something and when her eyes opened, she blinked, trying to adjust to the darkness around her. She walked forwards a little, once her eyes had come to terms with where she was, she noticed the ripples from the water she was walking through, spreading like wildfire. She could hear something in the distance, she could hear some music. Was it some one singing?

"Should I stay, or should I go now, if I go there will be trouble and if I stay it will be double, should I stay or should I go?"

"WILL!" Hope called, recognising his soft voice. He was here but she could not see him. "Hope..." She heard her name being called, it sounded faraway, yet she somehow knew she was being pulled back to reality. She could feel the tugging on her shoulders, or was it shaking? She could not understand but she closed her eyes and when she opened them again, she was back in the Byers living room. Her hand removed from Will's. "What the hell just happened?" Hopper asked her as he picked will up, cradling him like a baby. Hope looked up at Hopper. "He's in there." She told him. Her voice gruff. Hopper eyed her suspiciously but then walked towards the door.

"Did you just...?" Dustin asked her suddenly, but his voice faded as he pointed to Hope's nose as Hope glanced at him. She brought a hand up to her nose and wiped at it, a crimson colour appearing on the back of her hand. The blood was seeping from her nostril. "We're

connected... the shadow somehow, I heard him..." She told Dustin as she forced herself to get up and watched as Hopper carried Will outside to the shed, Joyce, Mike, and Jonathan following after him. "You're bleeding, like..." Dustin started but Hope shook her head. "Don't say it. It's just the mind flayer." Hope informed Dustin who watched Hope get up and go pour herself a glass of water. Steve and Nancy approached Dustin. "She channelled Will." Dustin whispered to the two of them when he noticed their curious facial expressions. The two teenagers looked over to Hope who was rubbing her temples slowly and resting her elbows on the kitchen counter.

A few minutes passed and Jonathan came back into the house. He stomped to his room and grabbed a stereo before he headed back out to the shed. A few minutes after that the lights in the room started to flicker and then Hopper barged in. He looked over at Hope with concern. Hope smiled a thin line at Hopper who grabbed a paper and a pen. He started drawing circles and squiggles. "Morse code?" Dustin asked and Hopper nodded at the kid. "He's in there, this is how he's trying to reach us." Hopper informed the party who hovered around him while he drew the marks. Lucas ran into Will's rooms and appeared with a Morse Code translator. They quickly translate what Hopper had written and read out loud, "HERE!" Hopper handed Nancy the walkie talkie before he took his own one with him. "How did you know?" He asked Hope before he went back out to the shed, "That he was still in there?" He added at her confused facial expression. Hope's eyes darted to her scar and Hopper scanned her quickly before he exited the room. He was a strange man. Hope thought to herself before lifting herself up off the chair she had perched herself on and joined the group around the dining room table.

Dustin and Lucas assisted Nancy with the morse code translation. Once they were done there were two words scribbled on the piece of paper in front of them. "CLOSE GATE!" Nancy read out loud. "Well, that's just great." Dustin moaned just as the phone started to ring. "SHIT!" Dustin cried out, lunging for the phone, and lifting it off the holder before putting it down again. It rang again and before Dustin could pick it up again Nancy tore it off the wall and threw it to the ground. "Do you think he heard it?" Max asked this time, looking wide eyed at the terrified teenagers around the room. "It's just a

phone, could be anywhere right?” Steve spoke this time, looking towards Hope who he had noticed was looking out the window now. “It knows.” Hope spoke softly. The room’s eyes trailed on her as she continued to stare out the window.

The others from the shed dashed back inside as the growling and screeching was heard from a distance. “GET AWAY FROM THE WINDOWS!” Hopper yelled at the kids but mainly Hope who had been staring blankly out of the one at the door. “HOPE!” He yelled at her and she took a step back, seemingly reluctant. “Do you know how to use this?” Hopper shoved the shot gun in Jonathan’s direction. Jonathan shook his head. “I do!” Nancy called to him and Hopper tossed the gun in her direction and she caught it with ease. Nancy readies herself. “HOPE, getaway from the god damn window!” Hopper called out to her, but she seemed to have frozen. “She’ll be fine!” Dustin cried out from somewhere in the back, he was standing behind Steve who was wielding his nail bat.

There was silence in the house now as the creatures circled the property outside. “What are they doing?” Nancy asked, in a hushed tone. Hopper kept darting his eyes from the windows to the door towards Hope.

Snap

“What’s happening?” Dustin whined but suddenly there was a loud crash, and a demo-dog was thrown through the window. Hope clutched at her scar and her muscles spasmed as the creature crashed onto the floor. She stared at it for a while as the pain seemed to ease up. The creature was dead.

Hopper stepped forward and nudged at the creature with his heavy boot. He looked up as the lock on the door clicked and slid open by itself. His eyes darted to Hope who was staring at the door just as confused as everyone else was. Once the last lock was removed the door swung open on its hinges.

The girl stepped into the room and looked at everyone standing around. She eyed Hope out before being engulfed in a hug by Mike.

“Eleven...” Dustin breathed out slowly.

11. Fight or Flight Part 2

Summary for the Chapter:

Eleven is reunited with the party. Billy interrupts the party's mission. The party distracts the demo-dogs and an unconscious Hope wakes up to a shock.

Fight or Flight – Part 2

The party gathered around the superpower that was Eleven. Eventually after Mike let her go and spoke to her, “I never gave up on you, I called you every night for ...” He started but Eleven butted in, “For 365 days, I know. I heard.” And Mike looked perplexed, “Why didn’t you answer, to let me know you were okay?” He asked her and Hopper cut in this time, “Because I wouldn’t let her.” He advised and he stared at Eleven, “Where have you been?” He asked her, voice stern. “You’ve been hiding her?” Mike rounded on Hopper now. He started yelling at Hopper and shoving him as much as he could but Jim Hopper being the big man that he is did not budge at Mike’s attempts. “Let’s talk, alone.” Hopper told Mike and pushed him into Will’s bedroom and closed the door.

The rest of the party could hear yelling from Mike’s part then Hopper’s booming voice was heard before it was silence. El hugged the rest of the party in greeting. She ignored Max and went straight to Hope. She pointed at Hope’s arm and Hope reluctantly showed her the scar. El sighed then pulled Hope over to the sedated Will who was on the couch again. Joyce hurries over to Eleven, Hope and Will and hugs Eleven quickly before talking. “He’s not doing well.” Joyce informed Eleven sadly. She nodded, “I know, I... I saw, I also saw you, in the void.” She turned her head to Hope who had been watching El since she had come into the house, Eleven, seemed to take notice of the stares and took hold of Hope’s hand. Hope yanked her hand away like Eleven had burnt her skin suddenly causing Joyce and El to frown. “Close it, do it now.” Hope told Eleven through gritted teeth but to Hope it was more of a warning. She had felt the darkness grow stronger in her the minute Eleven had walked through the house. The darkness could sense Eleven was here to destroy it and even though Hope was trying desperately to not let it take over

her completely she could feel it pushing through when she was close to Will and now when she was close to Eleven. She got up without another word and grabbed Hopper's cigarettes and lighter from the table and walked out of the house onto the porch.

Hope sat on the porch steps and lit one of Hopper's Marlboro's with a shaky hand. She did not know how long she had been outside before she heard Dustin's small voice. She was on her second cigarette and pacing up and down the front garden when she heard him call her from the front door. "Hope, we have a plan." He told her, walking out onto the porch so he could see her more clearly. "I can't come in there." Hope warned her brother who seemed to understand. "They're taking Will to burn the mind flayer out of him with heat because we know the mind flayer doesn't like heat!" Dustin told her and she nodded slowly. "And what about the gate?" She asked Dustin who nodded, "El and Hopper are going to the lab to close it." He told her and she nodded again. She stubbed the end of her cigarette out onto the lawn.

Hopper and El came out of the house and he motioned for Hope to throw him his box of smokes. She did as she was told, and she watched them walk to the truck. Joyce, Nancy, and Jonathan then came out of the house holding some old heaters and lots of blankets. Jonathan was carrying Will. "We'll see you." Jonathan called to Hope who nodded. Hopefully if they got the shadow out of Will it will get out of Hope too. This was their mindset. They drove away and once they were out of the house Hope went back inside.

"You okay?" Steve asked her and she shook her head. Dustin eyed her wearily. He motioned for her to sit on the couch and she did. Max sat down next to Hope and watched her carefully.

Hope watched as Dustin tried to push the dead demo-dog into the Byer's fridge. "It's not going to fit!" Steve complained to Dustin who frowned at Steve while holding the slimy interdimensional creature. "This is a ground-breaking scientific discovery. We can't just bury it like some common mammal! It's not a dog!" Dustin informed Steve who helped take some stuff out of the freezer to make room for the creature. "Fine, you're explaining this to Mrs Byers, got it?" Steve told him with a pointed finger and Dustin sighed and nodded.

Hope's gaze flickered over to Mike and Lucas. Mike was pacing around like a mad man. "Mike, would you just stop?" Lucas asked him, his tone was laced with annoyance. "You weren't in there, there is hundreds of those dogs in the lab." Mike told Lucas. Mike was also annoyed. "The chief will take care of her." Lucas reminded Mike. Dustin scoffed this time. "Like she needs protection." "Wait so the demo-dogs they have a hive mind, right?" Dustin spoke again, looking at the rest of the party, seriously. Mike and Lucas nodded. "When they ran away from the bus, they were called away. What if we get their attention, draw them away from the lab?" Dustin added. "Clear a path to the gate." Lucas ended and Dustin nodded, grinning at Lucas. "And we all die, no." Steve stated bluntly, shaking his head at the absurd plan.

Mike ran over to a table and grabbed one of Will's drawings he had been drawing when he had episodes. "So, if this is some sort of map of the tunnels the chief was talking about earlier, this is the hub. We could lure the demo-dogs to the hub, we could burn it somehow because the mind flayer hates heat. He would send his army away and leave a clear path for El and Hopper at the gate. "And we all die!" Steve commented again, shaking his. "Guys, we're staying here, we're not doing any of this plan alright. I was told to keep you shitheads safe and that's what I'm going to do!" Steve ended the conversation. The boys frowned at him.

There was a revving of an engine heard. Hope snapped her head to the window. Max copied Hope but actually got onto her knees and peered out of the window. "Shit, it's my brother." Max stated and she looked at Hope. "How did he find us?" Lucas cried out, coming to the window to have a look too. He eyed Hope out who frowned at him. "I didn't tell him anything." She swore and Lucas turned his head back to the window. "He can't know I'm here." Max reminded Hope who nodded and got up from the couch. She walked over to the front door and opened it slowly. Steve stood behind her, but Hope shook her head at him. "If he's been tormenting you all this time do you really think he's going to be pleased to see you here? Let me talk to him." She told him, holding out her hand to stop him from moving and Steve frowned a little but nodded anyway and stood back.

She stepped out onto the porch to see Billy stepping out of the car

and lighting a cigarette. "Am I dreaming or is that you Henderson?" He asked, casually but Hope could hear the confusion in his voice. He took a drag of his cigarette and breathed in the smoke. "What are you doing here?" Hope asked him, just as casually as he had spoken to her before. She added a perfect, sweet smile. She walked over to him and he smirked at her, handing her the smoke and she took it and inhaled. "I could ask you the same thing, sweetheart." He said, and he leaned against the Camaro. He licked his bottom lip and stared at Hope through his dark lashes, and Hope watched him, warily. She could not tell what mood he was in. Hell, she hardly knew the guy. "Weren't we meeting for a date?" He asked her through an inhale of smoke of a new cigarette he just lit while Hope smoked his previous one. She darted her eyes to the house then back to him. "Shit." She said, she had forgotten about it. "Mrs Byers asked me to babysit the kids while she was running some errands." Hope quickly informed Billy who was eyeing Hope's outfit out. "I was going to come meet you when she got back." She added and Billy frowned this time. "I was supposed to fetch you from your house." He reminded her and she threw the end of her cigarette to the ground and stomped it out with her foot. She knew Steve was listening and she hated the fact he would probably question her about this conversation later. "I'm actually here looking for my sister, Max, you know the red head you met the other day, bit of bitch?" He told her and Hope's eyes darted quickly back to the house again before they went back to Billy. She hoped he had not noticed. "I haven't seen her today." She lied. He stared back at her and inhaled some smoke again.

Billy opened his mouth to speak but Hope felt the pain before he could even say anything. "Not now." She moaned before her hand flew to her scar to try and stop the pain that was being inflicted. She knew at this moment that Joyce, Nancy, and Jonathan were trying to get the mind flayer out of Will. She stumbled forward, losing her balance, she fell into Billy. He caught her swiftly and stared at her, puzzled. His one hand on her waist trying to get her to balance and the other one holding onto her left arm, where the scar was interacting with the exorcism happening to Will. Her entire body seemed to be spasming. "HEY!" Steve called out from the front porch where he had been watching the interaction. He ran over to the two and Billy stared him down. "What the hell are you doing here Harrington?" Billy growled at him and Steve frowned. "What did you

do to her?" Steve yelled, grabbing Hope by both of her arms, and yanking her away from Billy. "Bring her inside Steve!" Dustin yelled. They had been watching from the window in the lounge, but he was now standing at the open front door. Max was standing next to Dustin and Billy frowned at her. Steve dragged Hope up the porch steps and into the lounge. She was writhing. Steve plopped her onto the couch with difficulty. Billy had followed Steve into the house and was staring at Hope. Max saw the worry in his eye, but just as quickly as the worry had entered him it left him, and he immediately rounded on Max. "We're leaving." He went to grab her arm to drag her out of the house, but she stepped back. "No!" Max cried and Billy glared at her. He tried again. "What the fuck Max!" Billy cried out in frustration and Max stared over him at Hope. "Dustin!" Max called out to him, grabbing the sedative syringe from the kitchen counter, and throwing the syringe that had been used on Will to Dustin. He caught it swiftly and jabbed what was left of the sedative into his sisters' arm, without thinking. Hope stilled.

"What the fuck, Dustin?" Steve yelled at the boy who dropped the syringe on the floor. "She's in pain!" Dustin pointed out to Steve frantically. Steve pulled at his hair and stared at Hope who was now unconscious. "Doesn't mean you should just poke any old thing into her!" Billy called out from where he was still trying to get Max to leave. He was getting fed up now. Steve scoffed, "Yeah, you're one to talk!" Billy's head snapped to Steve. "What was that Stevie boy? Do I sense a little bit of jealousy, the fact that I'm hooking up with her, or wait..." Billy sneered at Steve, he was walking over to him "Do you actually like her or something?" He questioned and Steve frowned. Dustin looked up at Steve now, a questioning look in his eye too. Steve shook his head at Dustin then turned to Billy. "Why are you even here?" Steve asked, ignoring Billy's remark. The two started to bicker. "GUYS!" Mike yelled at the older teens who glared at him for interrupting them. "We still have to go to the tunnels!" Mike reminded Steve. Mike stared at Billy for a time that would have been deemed as creepy. He did not care that Billy was here, he actually was glad Billy was here because now they had a car.

"What?" Billy spat and Mike eyed Billy out cautiously first before he spoke. "You have a car. Can you take us to the pumpkin fields?" He asked hesitantly but once the words were out, he waited with bated

breath as Billy scowled at him. Billy looked at the others who were all waiting for the reply. "We can help save Hope." Max chimed in this time and Billy's eyes fluttered to the unconscious girl on the couch. "Save her from what?" Billy asked, curiously. "We'll explain on the way!" Max informed Billy. "No, we won't." Steve retorted. He was glaring at Max who frowned at him. "We're not going anywhere. We're waiting here for the rest to get back." Steve scowled, putting his foot down. Billy sneered at Steve now and then turned his face to Max. "Fine, I'll take you shits there. You're all in the back though, I don't care how you fit, no fucking up the leather either." Billy pointed at Max and she smiled at Billy half-heartedly and then turned to Steve who was staring daggers at Billy.

"What about Hope?" Dustin asked, as Lucas, Mike and Max scurried around grabbing the goggles and bandanas and a map and anything else they may need for their adventure down the tunnels. Billy pushed passed Steve who was still glaring at the others running around, getting themselves ready. Billy put one arm underneath Hope's legs and another arm wrapped around her back and he hoisted her up. He threw one of Hope's arms around his neck and her head rested on his shoulder. "Ah come on!" Steve moaned. Billy started to walk to the door. "No man, we can't leave. I promised the chief I'd keep everyone safe." Steve called to Billy who turned back to look at him. Dustin watched the interaction with the two older teens. "Apparently this will keep everyone safe." Billy reminded Steve. "You can stay, or you can come." Dustin told Steve who frowned at the younger Henderson. Lucas, Mike, and Max were already out the door following Billy who was cradling Hope in his arms. Steve grabbed his bat, frowned one last time at Dustin and followed the others out the door.

"I know you're only helping them out because I said no." Steve said to Billy and Billy smirked back at him, not saying a thing. "Get in." Billy ordered the kids who scrambled into the car. Steve stayed back and attempted to push the front chair back again so he could climb in the front seat, but Billy shook his head. "Where's she supposed to go? Get in the back Harrington." Billy ordered Steve. The scowl on Steve's face looked like it was going to stay for the rest of the night while they were in the presence of Billy. Steve huffed and pushed the chair back and climbed in the back seat squeezing in with the others.

Max climbed onto Lucas's lap and Dustin sat on Steve's to his annoyance. Mike sat in the middle. Billy placed the unconscious Hope on the front seat and watched her head flop to the side and the side of her forehead hit the window as he closed the door. He shook his head and he trudged over to the driver's seat.

Once he was in the seat and had started the car he turned to the back. "So, anyone going to give me directions?" He asked and Lucas quickly opened up the map. "Max?" Billy asked, and Max nodded and started to read the directions to Billy as he sped out of the Byer's garden. Once they had arrived at the pumpkin fields, where Chief Hopper had dug the hole when he realized there were tunnels growing under Hawkins, the kids climbed out of the car from Billy's side. He pushed the seat back and turned to the kids. "I still have no idea what is going on here." He pointed out to Max who nodded and looked back at the others. "Thank you." Was all she said and then Mike spoke, "we need to get down there quickly." and shoved on his goggles and bandana and grabbed a torch from the bag that had been placed in the boot. The others followed suit and Billy watched as Steve lowered a rope down into the hole and climbed down, disappearing from view. Dustin followed not before he warned Billy that if his sister was not in two pieces when he got back up their would-be hell to pay, then Mike and Lucas and finally Max. Billy walked back to the car and got into the front seat, lighting one of his cigarettes and watching Hope. She was breathing at least. He could see the way her chest moved up and down.

Billy slowly reached over to Hope and moved a piece of hair that had been covering her face. He wrapped it around her ear and sighed. He got out the car again and paced for a while.

Hope's eyes shot open a few minutes into Billy's pacing. She panicked because she did not know where she was. Her hand found the handle to open the door and she shoved it open and fell out of the car. She yelped. "Woah, slow down!" Billy called, running over to her after hearing the car door open and hearing the thud and the small sound that came out of her mouth. She stared at him wide eyed as he held out his hand for her so she could use him to help pull herself up. She took his hand and her eyes flickered around them he could see she was trying to figure out where they were. "Dustin..." She whispered,

eyeing out the surroundings, her eyes adjusting to the darkness. "Down there." Billy pointed to the hole in the ground. He was still holding her hand and he could feel that same magnetic pull he felt for her that night at the Halloween party. She was holding his hand and her other hand was resting on his chest, so she did not fall over again. His other hand was resting on her lower back. She pushed herself away from him with the hand that was on his chest and leaned against the car. Her free hand grabbed her sleeve of the leather jacket she had been wearing and pulled it up her arm and eyed out her scar. It was white. No veins, no blackness, she felt a sense of calm rush over her. She breathed out a breath she did not know she had been holding. She realized she was still holding Billy's hand. He was eyeing out her scar too. He pulled her arm towards him and he inspected it carefully. "Guess they didn't give you enough of that stuff, usually you have to use some sort of strong chemical to wake someone up from a sedative." He spoke slowly and Hope watched him, she was confused. "Oh yeah, your brother sedated you." He added and Hope frowned. "Why?" She croaked and Billy looked at her seriously, "Something about you being in pain?" He questioned and Hope nodded slowly, she understood even though Billy did not. "Why are you here?" Hope asked, her memory fuzzy. "I was looking for Max, then got dragged into this mess, whatever this mess is." He told her honestly, his voice was low, and he gestured his hand out towards the hole in the ground. He stared at her for a bit, analysing her, hoping she was okay. Their eyes locked and for a few minutes they just stared at each other. Hope could feel his warmth, she could feel the rough skin of his hand more prominently now that she had been holding it for far too long. Her butterflies arose from their slumber and her curious stare turned into a grin. He furrowed his brow and watched her carefully. She pulled him closer to her and their foreheads touched. She breathed deeply. "Thanks." She whispered to him and he nodded, her breath tickled his lips. He took her chin in his free hand and lifted her face so he could see her face better. He leaned down, ready to kiss her when there was a loud thud and Max's body hit the ground after being shoved back up the hole. She was pulling up Lucas. Hope pulled away from Billy who turned his head in the direction of Max. The two teenagers rushed forwards to help the others up. "You're awake?" Max questioned when she saw Hope and Hope nodded back at her. Lucas was next and then Mike. "Wait!" Steve called from the bottom of the hole and the ground

rumbled beneath them. “DUSTIN!” Hope called out in panic and stuck her head down the hole. Steve and Dustin were shielding themselves as a pack of demo-dogs rushed past them, they did not attack they were headed back home. Once there was silence Steve pushed Dustin back up and Hope grabbed his arm and pulled him up. Once he was on the ground, he helped pull Steve up. “What the hell happened?” Hope cried out once everyone was up. She was interrupted however by the Camaro’s lights beaming brightly. “What the fuck?” Billy cursed before running over to his car. The lights dimmed.

“She did it!” Mike breathed a sigh of relief and collapsed onto the ground.

12. I Wanted to Forget You

Summary for the Chapter:

The aftermath of the weekend events.
Hope and Billy chat.
Some unexplainable things start to happen to Hope.

Notes for the Chapter:

The song Forget me too by Machine Gun Kelly Feat Halsey inspired this chapter. I know it's not a song from the 80's but it's a good song.

Chapter 12 – I wanted to forget you

“Sorry for sedating you.” Dustin told Hope who nodded and shrugged. “Knowing you, you probably did it for the best of everyone.” Hope said, throwing an arm around Dustin’s shoulder and walking him back to the Camaro. “What the fuck happened down there?” Hope overheard Billy asking Max. Hope did not hear Max’s response so, she asked Dustin instead. “What happened down there?” Dustin looked over at her, “Seems like the demo-dogs were going back to the gate, they acted like we didn’t exist but we did manage to burn the vines and hey guess what Dart recognised me and I fed him some musketeers bar to distract him so the others could get back.” Dustin informed Hope. He had a proud grin on his face and Hope felt proud of the party.

“Does he know?” Hope asked Dustin, motioning her head over to Billy and Dustin looked at the stepsiblings. Max was trying her best to avoid Billy’s questioning with asking questions of her own and they began to bicker.

Dustin scoffed and shook his head, “Max basically bribed him into driving us here by saying that she would tell him what was going on, but I think he mainly did it because she said it would save you.” Dustin told Hope with a nod and she sighed. “What exactly happened to me?” Hope questioned as they reached the Camaro. Hope opened the passenger door and pushed the seat to the front. “You blacked out

and were sort of like... convulsing?" Hope shook her head and sighed. "Great." She added, sarcastically, with a dramatic eye roll.

Dustin looked back at Steve and whispered to Hope, 'Do you think Steve likes you?' He asked and Hope laughed out loud this time just as the others arrived at the car. "We'll continue this conversation at home." Hope told Dustin who sighed and agreed. "Finish what conversation?" Billy asked, with a smirk on his face and Hope slowly smiled at him. "Sibling stuff." She responded and Billy rolled his eyes.

The others climbed into the car and Billy started the engine. "Where to?" He asked casually, rolling down his window to let a breeze flow through the car. Hope copied him. "Our house." Dustin responded, "Steve's car is there, should we give you directions?" Dustin asked and Billy shook his head and he gazed over at Hope. He slowly rested his hand on Hope's leg. Dustin looked at the exchange and rolled his eyes before looking at Steve who seemed to be staring daggers at Billy. Hope stared at Billy's hand on her leg and looked back at Dustin who was looking at Steve. She quickly moved his hand and put it back on the gear shift. Billy smirked at her and she ginned back, slightly. She shook her head and motioned her head to the back seat and Billy seemed to understand.

Once they had reached the Henderson household. The kids minus Max all got out of the car. Steve nodded his head towards Billy in thanks before making his way to the house. Dustin bounded after Steve, followed by Mike and Lucas. Hope rested her elbows onto the open window frame of the Camaro and leaned into the window to have a better look at Billy. He smirked at her. She smiled at him, genuinely and he seemed to change his smirk into a proper grin. "Ugh, if you guys are going to make out, please let me exit this car." Max moaned from the backseat.

"Seems like our date didn't go as planned." Billy spoke, his voice low and enchanting. He ignored Max completely. "Thanks, for tonight, it means a lot that you wanted to help the kids and uh Steve." Hope gestured her head to where the rest of the party was standing.

"You know, he only helped us to piss Steve off because Steve said no to us going to the fields." Max chimed in. Max hoped it would maybe make Hope angry and put her off Billy, finding out that he actually

had not cared that she was in trouble or that the kids were in trouble, he only did it for his selfish need to annoy Steve. She did not want Hope to be hurt by Billy in anyway. She knew how he could be. She knew how Billy only had one thing on his mind most of the time and she could see Hope being drawn to Billy like a moth to a flame. Yes, he had helped them tonight but, Max could see it in Billy's eyes the moment Steve had said no to them back at the Byers, Billy could not help himself and defy Steve's rules. Maybe he had even taken a liking to Hope just to make Steve angry. Billy knew that Steve and Hope were friends. Maybe he had even thought they were more than friends which is why Billy was pushing so hard for the two to go on a date. Max had never seen Billy act like this with a girl before, it was weird for her and she needed to stop whatever was happening before it escalated into something more. Billy was competitive and when he saw decent competition, he just upped his game. This was all a game to him and, Max could see it but could Hope?

Hope stood back from the window now and saw how Billy shot an annoyed look at Max. "No one was speaking to you, Maxine!" He warned her through gritted teeth. Hope laughed nervously, and suddenly had a sick feeling in her stomach after hearing Max's comment. Dustin had said earlier that he thought Billy had helped them to save Hope, but maybe what Max had said was true, Max did know Billy best and Steve had kept going on and on about Billy tormenting him since he got here. Hope had seen it for herself during the basketball practice the day after Halloween, but she just registered it as some sort of competitiveness between the two of them. The way Dustin had told her that he had tried to run them over on Halloween also flooded back into her memories. She frowned now.

"Maybe we should just cut our losses you know it doesn't seem like the world wants us to be together anyway." Hope told him quietly, with a small shrug. He looked at her now, a look she had not seen on him. She did not like it. His blue eyes, once kind from the grin on his face were now a swirling storm. It was making her uncomfortable and she shifted on her feet.

Half of what she had said was true. Every time they had kissed, every time things had seemed to go further, they had been interrupted.

Every time. Did she want to see where it could lead too sure, but she was also feeling that whatever was happening between them, no matter how strong the pull was between them, was it worth all the stress?

Was she really blaming it on stress or was Hope just backing out because she did not want to cause problems for the people around her? She really did not understand what was going through her head right then, but Max's words had stuck with her. *"He was only doing it to piss off Steve."*

"Thanks for the ride Billy and thanks Max." She turned on her heel and walked towards the house, feeling his eyes burning on her back but she was not going to look back at him. She needed to forget about Billy Hargrove, for everyone else's well-being.

"I can't believe you offered for us to assist with decorating the middle school hall for the snowball dance." Hope complained to Nancy a few days later at school.

They had taken a few days off to recuperate after the weekend's events thanks to Chief Hopper who had come up with an elaborate lie as to why all the kids needed a break. They were now back at school catching up with what they had missed.

"I thought it would be a nice distraction." Nancy told Hope and Hope frowned, "Nice." Hope gagged at the word and Nancy laughed. "Come on, it won't be that bad." Nancy reassured her and Hope continued to frown. "You know, the wind will change one day, and your pretty face will be stuck in that horrible frown." Nancy joked and Hope chuckled and shook her head.

Jonathan joined them at the lockers a few minutes later and Hope looked up at him. "Hey, how's Will doing?" She asked him and he nodded. "Better, considering." He responded and he laced his fingers with Nancy's. They were dating now. "My mom won't let him leave her sight though." He added as Hope eyed out their hands joining. Nancy blushed and kissed Jonathan on the cheek. "I can only imagine." Nancy told him and Jonathan shrugged, "Will's getting a bit annoyed with her." He admitted and Hope nodded.

There was a commotion down the hall and Hope's gaze directed to it. Billy and Tommy were antagonizing a freshman. Tommy had him pinned to one of the lockers and was saying something to the kid. Billy smirked at the situation in front of him like he was enjoying the show. Hope rolled her eyes. There were rumours going around that Billy's temper had flared even more since the weekend's events. He had been kicked out of classes for back chatting teachers, he had been sent to the principal's office numerous times and according to Tina and Carol he was bullying the younger kids or getting Tommy to bully them for his satisfaction.

Nancy had told Hope this the minute Hope had arrived at school that morning. Hope finally got her car back so she was able to drive herself. Hope had wondered if it had anything to do with her ending whatever they had but she doubted it because apparently, he had been like this before, but she had not really seen the horrible side to Billy, well maybe that one day in the arcade when he told her to keep Max away from the boys or the way he had spoken to Max but... ah who was she kidding she had obviously just tried to block out the way he acted because of how much she thought she liked him.

Tommy had released the freshman who scuttled away from them and Billy made his way over to Tina and Carol and smirked at Tina and flirted with her right in front of them. Nancy frowned and rolled her eyes and turned her attention back to Hope whose eyes were glued to the situation happening in front of them. He had not once looked in their direction, so Hope was not sure if he had even seen them but the normal butterflies in her stomach bubbled and turned into an angry, swarm of bees.

Hope slammed her locker so loudly it echoed around the hallway. Students turned to stare and so did Billy, Tina, Carol, and Tommy. Nancy jumped at the loud sound and watched as Hope's eyes glared into Billy's. It was like a staring competition and whoever looked away first would lose. Billy's blue eyes poured into her green ones. Hope could no longer hear the buzz of kids in the hallway. The bees swarmed in her stomach, but she was brought back to reality suddenly as another loud bang could be heard. Tina's open locker slammed shut by itself. "Tina!" Carol yelled as she jumped in fright and Tommy laughed. Billy's gaze broke Hope's and he looked at the

locker, surprised. He lost. "I didn't touch it!" Tina cried out to Carol. Tina's eyes were wide.

"Hope, you're bleeding." Nancy pointed to Hope's nose. "Billy turned back to Hope with a frown on his face, but Hope had turned her head away and was wiping at her nose. Hope stared at the back of her hand and saw the crimson colour glistening back at her. "I'm going to the bathroom, will see you in English." Hope informed Nancy who nodded, and she walked off towards the girl's room.

Once inside the bathroom Hope grabbed some of the hand towel from the dispenser, ran the cold water over it and dabbed at her nose while staring at herself in the mirror. Memories from Saturday night came rushing back. She recalled grabbing Will's hand and being sucked into what Eleven calls "the void" she recalled Dustin shaking her out of there and then he pointed out that she was bleeding from her nose. Hope shuddered and lifted her cardigan up her sleeve so she can see her scar. It was normal. Could she have slammed Tina's locker shut with her mind? There was a click of the door behind her and her focus landed on Billy who had entered the bathroom after her and was now watching her control the nosebleed which seemed to have stopped.

Billy was slowly piecing the weekend events together. There was definitely something weird going on in this town. Max had barely said anything to him since then, it was like she was avoiding him. He hadn't seen Hope in a few days either and it was driving him insane. He had heard her say they should cut their losses with whatever was happening between them but he did not want to believe it was true so he had seen her at the lockers with Wheeler and Byers and wanted to see if he could still get a reaction out of her, so he chose to flirt with Tina. He did get a reaction out of her just not the one he expected.

Hope did not say anything to Billy at first. She threw the hand towel in the dustbin and washed her hands. She turned around eventually and faced him. He was still watching her silently. "Are you lost?" She spoke finally and he frowned. "I just wanted to see if..." He stopped speaking, unsure of what to say. Hope tried to walk around him towards the door but he jutted out his arm so she could not pass him. She sighed, exasperated. "Why don't you go back to flirting with

Tina, you looked like you were enjoying it.” She spat at him. “You were the one that said we wouldn’t work out remember?” He told her and she closed her eyes and sighed again. “You’re running from something that hasn’t even happened yet.” He continued, his voice so low and enticing Hope opened her eyes and looked up at him. “Maybe you’re running because you’re scared.” He said to her, he let his arm down and watched as she froze on the spot. She did not move to leave, she just stared at him.

Hope realized she was scared. She was scared that everyone around her would look at her differently if she and Billy ended up together. He was not liked by most people, lusted after maybe, envied probably but nobody really liked him for him. Hope had to wonder why she was attracted to someone like him and it scared her. She was also annoyed with the fact that she had to care about what everyone else thought. Why couldn’t she just choose to be happy?

“We don’t even know each other.” Hope said softly. She was still looking at him and he was looking at her. His eyes were soft. “I want to know you. There’s something in me that needs to know you. I can’t explain it.” His voice was so low she had to lean into him to hear better. She breathed in his scent of cologne and cigarettes. He breathed deeply and closed his eyes. The bell rang. “I... I have to go. I’m going to be late.” Hope stammered. She walked towards the door and looked back at him he was staring after her “Maybe wait a few minutes after I leave.” She told him and he nodded and watched her leave.

Hope didn’t have time to think about Billy right now, she thought to herself as she made her way down the hallway to the exit of the building. She needed to figure out what was going on with herself and if she was really the reason Tina’s locker slammed shut. The nosebleed was a good sign that it had been her but how was it even possible? There was one person she needed to speak to, and she needed to leave school now so she could speak to her knowing that Chief Hopper would be at work and she would be alone at the cabin.

Eleven would hopefully have the answers Hope needed.

13. The Snowball

Summary for the Chapter:

Before the snowball Hope meets up with Eleven.
At the snowball things get heated between Hope and Billy.

Chapter 13 – The Snowball

Once Hope got to her car, she drove herself to Melvald's general store where she knew Joyce Byers was working. She needed the address for the cabin. She would not go to Hopper he would just ask questions. Hopefully, Joyce would be more lenient with her. She parked outside and hurried into the store looking around for Mrs Byers. She found Joyce, fixing some sort of ornaments that were on display in the window. "Mrs Byers..." Hope called out to her and Joyce looked up. "Hope? What are you doing here sweetie, shouldn't you be in school?" Joyce questioned, a worried look forming on her face and Hope frowned. She knew she would be questioned. "Uh, I have a sort of emergency. I need to speak to Eleven." Hope told Joyce right away and Joyce watched her carefully. "Can I have the address to Hopper's cabin?" She asked, before Joyce could respond to her previous statement and Joyce's left eyebrow raised. "Is everything okay?" She asked, coming over to Hope and staring at her, concerningly. Hope nodded too quickly for Joyce's liking, but Joyce sighed and grabbed a pad of paper and a pen. She jotted down some words and a number and tore the paper off the pad and handed it to Hope. "Don't tell Hop I gave it to you, or he'll kill me and get back to school the minute you're done with whatever it is you need to do." Hope smiled at Joyce. "Thank you!" Hope cried out, grateful that she had not asked any further questions. Hope grabbed the paper and headed for the door. "And Hope" Joyce called to her and Hope looked back at the pretty woman, "Be careful!" Joyce ended. Hope nodded and hurried out the door of Melvald's and to her car. She wondered to herself why it was so easy to get the address from Joyce, she was sure she would have to come up with some sort of lie to get it out of Joyce, but it had been easy, and Hope appreciated it.

Hope turned a sharp left and found herself driving down a barely

visible dirt road and into a forest. The tall, green trees surrounded her, and she turned on her car lights as the sunlight began to fade. After a few minutes of driving down the dirt road a wooden cabin came into Hope's view. Once she reached the cabin, she parked her car and shut off the engine. She got out the car and looked at her surroundings. It was pretty secluded here and she understood why Chief Hopper had hid Eleven here for nearly a year. Hope dug into the glove compartment and pulled out her cigarettes and lighter. She shoved them in her leather jacket pocket and proceeded to the front door.

She knocked on the door and waited a few minutes, there was no answer. Hope had no idea that Eleven only opened for Chief Hopper's secret knock, so she knocked again more loudly this time. "El? It's Hope Henderson. We need to talk!" Hope called out over her knocking. She looked through one of the windows that were beside the door, but the curtains were drawn. "EL?" Hope called again, no knocking this time. Hope waited a few more minutes before she heard the lock click on the inside. The door slowly opened and Hope hesitated before she pushed the door fully open and stepped inside. "Hey!" Hope said when she found Eleven sitting on the couch in the lounge. "You shouldn't be here." Eleven said slowly, and Hope nodded to herself. "Yeah, I know but I really need to talk to you, and you let me in." Hope advised the young girl, making her way to the couch and looking at Eleven.

El looked up at Hope and examined her before she got to her feet. "I actually think we should sit for this." Hope informed her and Eleven looked at her, reluctant to follow Hope's orders. "The void?" El said quietly and Hope stared at the girl for a few seconds before nodding. "I think something's wrong with me." Hope told El who was still staring at Hope. Hope felt like she was being x-rayed. El sat down on the couch slowly and Hope joined her and turned her body to the 14-year-old girl. Hope recounted what happened that morning at the school. She mentioned that she had felt angry when it happened. She told Eleven that her nose had bled how Eleven's bleeds when she uses her power. "The void, it..." Eleven thought hard for the right word and Hope wondered what she was trying to say and Hope eventually figured it out, she did not know how but she did, "activated?" Hope asked and Eleven looked at her. "Activated." Eleven copied Hope but

her pronunciation was slower, like she was trying to figure out what the word meant.

Hope had heard from Dustin that El was slower with communicating because she had never been taught properly.

“Did the void do this... to me?” Hope asked, quietly almost knowing the answer she was about to be given. Eleven nodded and pointed at the scar on her arm. “You are connected to him.” She told Hope. Hope’s brow furrowed and she stared down at the scar. “The mind flayer?” Hope questioned and Eleven nodded. “The void... activated” She said it slowly again and continued. “Your powers to keep you safe from him. You were never supposed to be in the void, but I think the void sensed you were in trouble, so it pulled you in.” Hope was trying hard to understand what Eleven was saying. She was speaking slowly, trying to string words together to make Hope understand. “The void likes to help me.” Eleven nodded, “It will help you too.” She ended and Hope leaned back in the seat and stared at the ceiling. Eleven rested her hand on Hope’s hand and Hope blinked back tears and looked back at the tiny girl that had saved the world not once but twice. “I can teach you.” She advised Hope. Hope saw the kindness in Eleven’s eyes and a tear dropped from her eye. Hope hastily wiped it away and nodded. “It will be fine.” Eleven told Hope, “Promise.” She added with a short nod. Hope smiled a small smile at El and nodded too.

Hope thanked Eleven again before she left the cabin in fear that Hopper could be back at any moment and question the two why Hope was there. Hope had asked El not to tell anyone what they were going to do, she was hesitant at first but after some persuading from Hope she agreed.

It was Friday and it was the day of the snowball dance at the middle school. Hope had reluctantly agreed to assist decorating the middle school gym with Nancy. They were also going to attend the dance and assist with serving punch, snacks, and anything else the chaperoning teachers needed help with. Jonathan was the photographer at the dance so at least the three of them would suffer together.

Nancy and Hope walked over to the middle school that afternoon. Hope had packed her dress and heels in a separate bag, as did Nancy. They would change into them later before the dance started. Hope entered the gym after Nancy and looked around at the streamers, balloons and a banner stating that this was going to be the snowball dance. "I hate how they make dances so cliché." Hope stated and Nancy laughed, "Come on, you go help put the banner up and I will go help with the balloons." Nancy told Hope and Hope rolled her eyes and waved Nancy off. "Oh, thank goodness, Ms Henderson. We need you to help lift the banner on that side." Ms Jules called out to Hope when she saw her. Hope nodded. She grabbed the other side of the banner but struggled to lift it high enough. "Do we have a ladder?" Hope asked Ms Jules who nodded and scuttled off to go find the ladder. "Need any help?" A deep, familiar voice spoke behind Hope and she turned her head in the direction of it.

Billy Hargrove.

Hope smiled slightly, "Uh, it's fine, we're getting a ladder." She started but Billy moved closer to her and stretched his muscly arm out and held onto the string she was holding. Hope held her breath as he got even closer to her as he stretched out further. He got the string on the hook and Hope caught a glimpse of his toned stomach as his shirt lifted up slightly. "Great Billy's here. We need you to move the tables over there!" Ms. Jules interrupted the two teenagers, pointing to the other side of the gym. Hope felt her face heat up as Billy pushed himself away from the wall and looked at Ms. Jules. "Sure." Billy spoke to Ms. Jules, and he smiled his flirtatious smile at the older woman who smiled in return and walked over to the tables.

"What are you doing here?" Hope found herself asking Billy before he walked away. "Detention." He smirked and Hope laughed, "Of course." She stated and his smirk widened before he walked over to the other side of the gym. Hope watched him go, well majority of the time she found herself staring at his ass which seemed to fit perfectly into the jeans he was wearing. She felt herself blush and she shook her head to herself before going over to Nancy who was busy blowing up the balloons with a machine.

After they had finished decorating the gym the teens and teachers looked around at their masterpiece. "It looks unrecognisable." Ms

Jules beamed, and Hope scoffed, and Billy looked over at her and chuckled. "Sure Ms. Jules." Jonathan spoke now, sarcasm shining brightly in his words, shooting Hope and Nancy a smirk. "Okay, let's go get dressed and meet back here when everyone's done." Ms. Jules clapped her hands and made her way to the teachers lounge.

Hope exited the gym with Nancy and Jonathan and Billy. "So, you guys actually offered your services to help out with this?" Billy asked, gesturing his hand to the gym, asking the three and Hope frowned and stared at Nancy, "She made me do it. Says it will make us look good." Hope told him and he laughed. Nancy rolled her eyes, "I have better things to do on a Friday night." Billy rolled his eyes, looked at Hope and grinned. Hope smirked back at him and laughed. "Oh what, like doing Tina Martin in the back of your Camaro at the quarry?" Hope shot at him, a grimace forming on her face. He looked back at her as he lit a cigarette, his mouth twitched up to the side in a one-sided smirk. "Or you..." His words muffled with the cigarette between his lips. He inhaled the smoke and blew it out. His half smirk turned into a full one before walking over to his car and leaving the three. Hope watched him go and turned to Nancy. "I could cut the sexual tension between you two with a knife." Nancy told Hope after she also watched Billy walk away. Jonathan rolled his eyes, "Come on Nance, it's not that bad." Hope told her and Nancy chuckled, "Are you kidding me? Did you see the way he was looking at you, and after he helped you guys that night, it's sort of like he redeemed himself!" Nancy exclaimed with a nod and Hope turned her head to Jonathan, waiting for him to say something, "He's still kind of a dick though." Jonathan added and Nancy shrugged but nodded, seemingly agreeing with Jonathan. Hope sighed.

Her butterflies had risen, and she turned her head back in Billy's direction. He was sitting in his car smoking and listening to some rock music.

Jonathan, Hope and Nancy had decided to come together this morning, so Hope's change of clothes was in Jonathan's car. Once they reached the car Hope grabbed her bag and she and Nancy headed to the girl's locker room in the middle school. They changed into their dresses. Hope's dress was a shiny purple colour with one flowing long sleeve on the left and a shorter sleeve on the right, it

came up to her mid-thigh. Nancy on the other hand wore a pink and black plaid dress with short sleeves and it came up to her knees. Nancy piled her hair on her head in a loose bun and dusted her face with some make up. Hope teased at her roots but let her dark curls hang loose down her back. She placed her feet in her black heels and put some pink eye shadow on her eyelids. She grabbed her handbag which had been shoved into her clothes bag and pulled out a flask. Nancy's eyes widened. "Hope, we can't drink here, we're at school, remember?" Nancy reminded Hope who laughed, "Nancy, if I'm doing this, I need to be a little buzzed, please, it's just tequila." Hope grinned and took a sip of the liquid and it burned her throat as it went down. "Mom's secret stash she doesn't think I know about." Hope winked and handed it to Nancy who continued lacing up her heels. Eventually Nancy caved and took a small sip before handing it back to Hope. "You're such a bad influence." Nancy remarked before chuckling. "I, Nancy Wheeler, am not a bad influence, you are just a party pooper." Hope said, shaking the flask in Nancy's direction, before laughing again. "Besides, I think we deserve to have a little fun, even if it's at a lame middle school dance." Hope smiled and Nancy thought for a bit and nodded, deciding they did deserve to have a little fun.

The girls joined the others back in the gym. Hope and Nancy giggled to each other as they came to a halt next to Jonathan, the tequila starting to take effect. Billy strode in after them still in his same clothes as before, but a smart jacket had been added to his outfit. Hope smiled at him and he looked her up and down. He nodded and returned his gaze back to Ms. Jules who was assigning tasks to everyone. "Billy and Hope, I would like you to please man the entrance, if kids don't have tickets, there's no entry, we don't want troublemakers here tonight." She told them sternly and Hope and Billy's eyes locked again as they shared a similar thought. "Nancy, you're in charge of the punch. Jonathan, photobooth." She continued. Billy smirked at Hope when their gaze lasted longer than it should have but Hope broke eye contact first by looking down at her feet, shifting slightly and feeling her cheeks become hot again. Nancy nudged Hope and gestured her head towards Billy who was already walking towards the entrance of the building where a table and two chairs stood, waiting for the two to take their seats. Hope rolled her eyes at Nancy and grinned at her before heading over to Billy. Hope

placed her handbag on the back of the chair and sat down. "So, we just wait?" Billy asked and Hope nodded.

It was half past five and the first middle schoolers started to arrive. Hope took their tickets and allowed them entry. More and more kids started to arrive, and Billy got annoyed with one kid and snapped at him, "No ticket no entry, lard ass. Rules are rules!" He stated his voice was low and intimidating. The younger kid lowered his head and walked away. "You could've been nicer." Hope scolded him, hands on her hips, they were both standing now as it was easier to keep track of the chaos around them. "And you could wear a longer dress, but I think you're just teasing me tonight." He came closer and whispered in her ear as his hand brushed against her thigh. Hope did not slap his hand away, she let it wonder but she pulled away when a clearing of a throat was heard. "Mike." Hope spoke now, slapping Billy's hand away and eyeing out the teenager trying to see how much he had seen. Mike looked down at the table and avoided Hope's eye. "Ticket?" Billy barked and Mike handed it to him with a frown. "Where are the others?" Hope asked, looking around for the rest of the party including her brother. "They're on their way." Mike responded with a curt nod before leaving Hope and Billy back to their duties. "Ugh... I need a break!" Billy moaned, stretching his muscly legs out while he sat in his chair. "Dustin!" Hope cried, ignoring Billy's complaining and staring at her brother, wide eyed. "Why do you look like Steve?" She asked him immediately and Dustin smiled. "Steve gave me some hair tips." Dustin responded, still grinning. His hand shot up to his hair and he fixed it up a bit and Hope laughed. "He dropped me here tonight." He added and Hope nodded, her gaze shooting past Dustin and landing on Steve's car outside the building. "That was nice of him." Hope said, smiling at her brother who nodded, "Now get in there and have some fun." Hope gestured her head to the crowd, and he nodded before disappearing into the sea of students.

"Can we please go have a smoke break now?" Billy moaned, getting up from his seat slowly. Hope gazed around the room and found Nancy. "Hang on a sec, I'll get someone to cover for us." Hope replied and hurried over to Nancy who was filling up cups of punch for middle schoolers. "Can you watch the door? Billy needs a smoke and I fear he'll just get crankier if he doesn't have one any time soon."

Hope told Nancy and she sighed “You guys have literally only been sitting there for half an hour but sure, I’ll watch from here.” Nancy nodded and Hope smiled gratefully at Nancy. “Let’s go, we’ve got ten minutes.” Hope told Billy who got up quickly, already putting a smoke in between his lips. Hope grabbed her bag and the two hurried out to Billy’s car. He leaned against the car and lit the cigarette casually. Hope took her own cigarettes out of her bag and lit one too. Billy eyed her out silently while she inhaled and exhaled. When Hope’s cigarette was halfway, she dug in her bag and brought out the flask, much to Billy’s surprise. “What?” Hope asked him, taking the lid of the flask off, and taking a sip. “Want some?” She asked, after she had swallowed, shaking the flask in his face. “What is it?” He asked curiously, taking the flask, and smelling the contents. “Tequila? Wow Henderson, I didn’t take you for such a wild gal!” He chuckled before taking a sip and handing the flask back to Hope. Hope rolled her eyes and took one more sip before closing the lid tight. She was just about to put the flask back in her bag when someone cleared their throat.

Hope whipped her head around to find herself face to face with Chief Hopper and Joyce Byers. “Hop come on.” Joyce whined to the chief. Billy’s eyes went sullen and Hope quickly shoved the flask behind her back and smiled sheepishly at the Chief and Mrs Byers. “Kids.” Chief Hopper nodded his head and Hope side eyed Billy and who was staring at the Chief with no expression on his face. “What’s in the flask Hope?” He asked, holding out his hand with a no-nonsense facial expression plastered on his face. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Hope’s voice was small, but she tried to make herself look big, like she had not done anything wrong. “Hope...” He drawled out and Hope sighed. She looked at Billy who was now staring at Hope, wondering what she was going to do. Hope handed over the flask and Chief Hopper chuckled, “You see, I told you Joyce.” He said, his voice booming with glee before he grabbed it and opened it up and took a sniff. “Claudia Henderson’s tequila stash I suppose?” He commented and Joyce rolled her eyes at the chief. “Now why would two teenagers be getting drunk in the parking lot of a middle school?” He questioned and took a sip of the tequila. “Hopper!” Joyce moaned and shot Hope an apologetic look, “We were young once, just let them be.” She continued, trying to pull him away by grabbing his arm and tugging but the Chief of police stayed

put. "We're actually assisting, manning the door." Hope pointed to the door. Billy cleared his throat and Hope looked back at him and he shook his head as if in warning. "We were just heading back in." Billy spoke now and Chief Hopper nodded and chuckled. He handed Hope back the flask and he seemed to get tired of Joyce begging him to leave them alone. "Just don't do anything I wouldn't do, and if you are going to be drinking, no driving." He pointed to Billy who nodded slightly. Hope breathed out and Hopper chuckled. "Strike two Hope..." He pointed at Hope who nodded quickly before stuffing the flask back in her bag.

"Strike two?" Billy asked once they made their way back to the school building, his eyebrow raised in amusement. Hope laughed and her face flashed bright red. "I kind of reversed into the back of his truck a few weeks ago." She informed him as they reached the table and chairs where they had been sitting. "I'm not the strongest driver." She admitted, giving him a sideways glance and he smiled a genuine smile, and a chuckle escaped his mouth. "Who taught you to drive?" He asked and Hope laughed this time, "Jonathan, but we fought majority of the time he was teaching me. He's a rubbish teacher but when I passed, he said it made him feel like a proud big brother." Hope ended and Billy laughed again.

They sat at the door for another 15 minutes but when no more kids arrived, they got up and went to search for Nancy. Hope and Billy made their way over to the punch table as Time after Time by Cindy Lauper played in the background. "Where is Nancy?" Hope stated, looking around. Her eyes landed on Nancy and Dustin. They were dancing together. She smiled at the sight as Nancy and Dustin laughed. She looked over at Mike who was dancing with Eleven. She must have arrived when Hope and Billy were outside. She smiled again before gazing over at Will and some girl she didn't know and then landing on Max and Lucas. Billy must have been looking at the same thing because she felt him stiffen up beside her.

"Do you wanna dance?" She suddenly found herself asking him and he looked down at her. His lip curled into a smirk and he bent down and whispered in her ear, "I don't dance." He informed her secretly and she looked back at him and chuckled. "Come on, it's fun." She grabbed his hand and pulled him onto the dancefloor. She figured it

was probably the tequila giving her the confidence she needed to make a move on Billy since they had not done anything with each other since the arcade, but she felt like being a crazy, normal teenager tonight. She wrapped her arms around his neck and he awkwardly put his arms around her waist, and she started to sway. He moved along with her slowly. "You see, fun." She said, looking up at him with a smile on her face. He smirked again and pulled her body closer to his. Their chests collided and Hope could feel Billy's breath as he brought his face down to her ears. "You know what else is fun?" He whispered, her hairs standing up on her arms as his breath tickled at her neck. He placed a sweet, soft kiss in the kink of her neck as they continued to sway. He kissed up her neck slowly, sending shivers down her spine as he did so. He lifted his face, so he was facing her, and he moved his one hand from her back and cupped her face with it. "This." He whispered and their lips finally locked again.

"Mr Hargrove and Ms Henderson!" Ms Jules squealed from the side of the couple as they broke apart from their heated kiss. They looked around to find most eyes on them. "Two feet apart!" She pointed a finger at the both of them and pushed them away from each other. Hope chuckled, suddenly remembering they were at a middle school dance and there were rules.

Billy smirked at Ms Jules and bent down to whisper into Hope's ear, "Wanna get out of here?" He asked her and she turned her head, grinned at him, and nodded. He grabbed her hand. "Sorry Ms Jules. Won't happen again!" Hope called as Billy dragged Hope away from the dance.

14. It's a Complicated Mess

Summary for the Chapter:

Billy and Hope's relationship progresses however
Hope's unexplained new power finds a target...

Notes for the Chapter:

SMUT WARNING

First time writing descriptive smut - let me know
how it is!

It's a Complicated Mess

When Billy and Hope got out of the school they started kissing again when they reached his car. Billy pinned Hope against the driver's door and pulled her legs up so she could wrap herself around his body. Billy did not hesitate this time. His fingers trailed up her dress, finding her sensitive spot almost immediately. He felt her smile into the kiss, and she pushed herself closer to him. He was tracing her from the top of her slit to the bottom, although he was still above her panties, she had not stopped him yet. She moaned slightly and pushed her body into him even more. "Do it." She whispered into his ear and he grinned. He pushed her panties aside and traced his finger over her sweet spot. He rubbed at it softly with his thumb as she continued to kiss him, hungrily. "Oh my god." She breathed out into his ear when she removed her lips from his and he continued to rub her. His other hand was on the small of her back, holding her up so he could reach her better. She bit at his neck and groaned some more but she heard her name being shouted in the distance. "Fuck, it's Nancy." He does not stop moving around her sensitive area and she could feel the tension building between her thighs, she kissed him one more time before she forced herself away from him and her legs plopped down onto the ground and he groaned. He adjusted his jeans and Hope noticed he was trying to conceal his dick. He took his thumb finger and stuck it into his mouth, sucking it and smirking at her. Hope slapped his shoulder and smirked at him before she fixed herself and turned back to face Nancy.

"Where do you guys think you're going?" She called to them. She put her hands on her hips and frowned in their direction. "We thought the dance was over." Hope called back, hoping that Nancy had not seen them fooling around. Billy was pulling her back by the skirt of her dress playfully and she shrugged him off. "Well, do you remember you have siblings that you need to take home?" She shot back, "Max and Dustin, remember them?" She added. Billy's demeanour changed suddenly. "Shit." He mumbled, running his hand through his hair.

Hope watched as his back straightened and saw how his laidback attitude changed to something of a soldier headed to war. Hope knew that Dustin would be able to get a lift back with either Joyce or one of the other moms so it had not bothered her that much, but she could see it bothered Billy. "Do you want to go back in?" She asked him and he shook his head. Billy looked at the watch on his arm and spoke, "Could you get Max out here, we have to be back before 10." He asked and Hope raised her eyebrow but nodded. "Is everything alright?" Hope asked him and he nodded while he lit a cigarette. He avoided her eyes so she couldn't see if he was lying or not, but the avoidance made it clear to her that he was. She rested her hand on his bicep. He flinched and looked at her like she had pinched him. She removed her hand quickly and stepped back. "I'll go get Max." She told him and he nodded as he exhaled a smoke stream.

Hope chewed on her thumb as she made her way back to Nancy. "Sorry." She stated and Nancy's facial expression changed to concern. "Is everything okay?" She asked, gesturing her hand to where Billy stood. "Yeah, he just wants me to get Max for him, they need to get home by ten." Hope told Nancy who nodded. Hope hurried inside and found Lucas and Max giggling by the punch. "Max, Billy says you guys need to go home." Hope told her and Max's eyes shot up to the clock on the wall. "Yeah, he's right. I got to go Lucas. I'll see you at school." She said to him, pecking him on the cheek. Lucas grinned and waved at Max as she hurried off. Hope hurried after Max. "Max, just make sure Billy's okay." She asked Max who stopped and looked at Hope weirdly. "Why? We'll be home on time. It should be fine." Max said, sounding doubtful but her mood changed back to curiosity, but Hope had already noticed the doubt. Hope shrugged, "He just changed so quickly when he realized it was nearly ten." Hope advised

Max who nodded, “He’s just playing the responsible big brother role Hope. Nothing to worry about.” Max smiled and waved at Hope as she passed Nancy on her way out. Hope followed Max out and watched as Max interacted with Billy. “Get in the car shitbird, don’t make us late.” His voice was deep and threatening. He turned his head obviously feeling a presence and his eyes met Hope’s. Hope waved goodbye awkwardly and he returned her wave with a casual nod as he got into his car and they drove off.

A few minutes later, the four boys and Eleven joined Hope outside followed by Nancy and Jonathan. Joyce and Hopper arrived to fetch Will and Eleven. The rest of the party walked towards Jonathan’s car. “So what’s up with you and Max’s brother?” Dustin asked Hope once they were in the car and on their way back home. Hope shot him a glare and he put his hands up in defence. “That was a pretty intense kiss.” Nancy chimed in and Hope wondered if Nancy meant the kiss inside or the stuff that had happened outside or if she meant both. Hope buried her head in her hands. “It’s complicated.” It came out muffled. “He’s complicated.” She corrected, she lifted her head and stared out the window.

Jonathan dropped Hope and Dustin off first. They made their way up the driveway towards their house. “Max was telling us that she hasn’t seen Billy so obsessed with one girl before.” Dustin told Hope and she stopped in her tracks. “Obsessed isn’t really a great word to use Dustin.” Hope shot at him and he turned his head back to her and realized she was further away now and not right behind him like before. “Well that’s the word she used. She told us that he hasn’t been like this since his last girlfriend in California.” Dustin continued and Hope, who was listening to Dustin intently cleared her throat. “Well, what happened between him and his previous girlfriend?” Hope asked, Dustin noticed the hint of worry in her eyes. “Max doesn’t know. All she knows is that they ended quite badly and that’s one of the reasons why they had to move here, despite Max trying to visit her dad all the time and Billy’s dad not liking it.” Dustin had finished, he was opening the door.

Hope chewed continued to chew on the skin of her thumb as she made her way to the front door where Dustin had disappeared into. As she made her way up the stairs to her bedroom, she thought about

Billy's fingers in her, on her. They had progressed, they still got caught out, but they had moved forward. She knew that if he had initiated sex tonight, she would have given it to him. That's the undeniable attraction she had towards him. She could feel it when they talked to each other, she could feel it when he looked at her, she could feel it when they were together but now the word Max had used – Obsessed, lingered in her brain and it did not sit well with her. She needed to speak to Max, she should probably speak to Billy, but she did not want to open up a can of worms if there weren't any worms to be spilled.

The next day Hope had a shift at the arcade. "You're coming right?" She asked Dustin when they were at the breakfast table and he nodded with a mouth full of cereal. They both were silent as they drove to the arcade. "Here's five dollars." Hope gave it to him once they had parked in the parking lot, and he smiled with pure glee. "Thanks, best sister ever!" He grinned before rushing into the arcade. She was glad he was gone because she could have a quick cigarette before her shift started.

She was exhaling a cloud of smoke when the blue Camaro pulled up and Max hopped out. She walked over to the car after waving at Max who dashed into the arcade with her flaming red hair billowing behind her. "Hey." Hope greeted Billy who looked up at her and smiled, a proper smile that made Hope's butterflies flutter about. "What time do you finish?" He asked her casually, "Round three." Hope told him and he nodded. "Can I take you out later?" He asked and Hope looked back at the arcade and then turned back to Billy and she nodded. She found she could not say no. She needed to be around him. "I'll meet you back here then, Flash dance?" He asked and she nodded, and he smirked at her. "Do you remember this is where we first met?" She found herself asking and he chuckled. "I thought you were a hooker." He reminded her and she rolled her eyes. "You look good today by the way." He complimented and he drove off. Hope looked down at her outfit and scoffed to herself. She looked good in tights and an oversized sweatshirt? Seriously? She rolled her eyes again, stomped out the finished cigarette and headed into the arcade.

When she got to the front desk she went to the backroom, changed into her uniform t-shirt, and went back to the front desk. "Welcome back." Keith said to her and she frowned. "What do you mean welcome back?" She asked and he laughed, "It's just been a while, that's all." He shrugged and popped a cheese ball into his mouth. Max came over to the front desk to ask for some change and Hope figured it was time she spoke about Billy. "Hey, can I have some more quarters?" She asked and Hope nodded and rounded up the quarters she could get for the five dollars Max was flashing in her face. "So, Dustin told me that Billy is obsessed with me. Is this true?" She asked outright and Max spluttered. "That little asshole, I told him not to say anything." Max responded. She glared in Dustin's direction, but he was too busy with his game to worry about anyone plotting any sort of revenge on him. "Hey, hey, language!" Hope called her out, clicking her fingers in Max's direction to get her attention back and Max rolled her eyes and laughed. "Come on, I'm sure you've said worse?" She queried and Hope chuckled, "Yeah, but I'm 17 years old. I'm allowed too." She responded sharply and Max rolled her eyes again.

"So anyway, my question?" Hope reminded Max who sighed. "Look, I didn't mean it to sound like he was creepy obsessed with you. Since the night of the junkyard he's been asking me questions, nearly all revolving around you, like hello Billy we were all involved that night." Max said and Hope's eyebrows raised. "What have you told him?" Hope asked and Max shook her head. "Nothing, I try and distract him or annoy him, so he forgets he asked anything. He's very easily distracted these days." Max nodded and Hope scoffed. "Why do you like him?" Max suddenly asked her, and Hope smiled. "I don't know, we seem to have some sort of chemistry." Hope shrugged and Max nodded in understanding. She knew what chemistry was, she could feel it with Lucas. "Just don't hurt him okay. He doesn't deal well with hurt." Max informed Hope and she nodded. "Wouldn't dream of it." She admitted, truthfully and Max smiled. "I'm glad he's found you, he's changed a lot, almost like he's back to his old self again." She told Hope.

For the rest of her shift Hope could not hold in her excitement for the date she would go on later.

She finished her shift, and she was happy that Dustin got a ride home with Mike. She could wait for Billy outside in peace. He arrived on time surprisingly and Hope jogged over to his car as he got out. He smiled at her and took her chin in his hand and kissed her softly in greeting. He moved his head away from her, but Hope wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him back, their lips meeting again but more roughly this time. "I haven't stopped thinking about you." She whispered to him, truthfully and he chuckled, "Me too. Should we go?" He asked and Hope nodded. "Should I leave my car here?" she asked him, and he nodded this time. She walked over to the passenger side and got in.

They drove in silence to the diner. It was Benny's diner. It had been revamped and reopened under new management, but it was still called Benny's. They sat in a booth with dark brown leather seat covers and a small light hanging above the table. The older waitress came to take their orders. Billy ordered a black coffee and Hope ordered a strawberry milkshake. They ordered a burger and fries for Billy and chicken strips and fries for Hope. She needed the barbeque sauce to go with the strips, but it needed to be on the side. Billy chuckled at the way she ordered the food, so specific and calculated. "Nothing touching!" She called out to the waitress as she walked away. The waitress waved her hand in Hope's direction as if she was telling her off.

Billy took a sip of his black coffee and watched as Hope stirred her milkshake three times clockwise and three times anticlockwise. Hope felt Billy staring and stopped what she was doing and smiled, embarrassed. "Sorry, this is why me and my family don't usually go out to eat." She told him and he shook his head, a chuckle escaping his throat, "I like things done a certain way and my brother doesn't approve, it embarrasses him." She smiled sheepishly and Billy laughed again. "Don't worry about it." He informed her and he continued, "Kind of like OCD, right?" He suggested and Hope shrugged. "My mom likes to call it bad habits, she thinks it started when my dad left..." Hope trailed off and Billy looked at her like he had not looked at her before. She was sharing her life stories with him. They hadn't done that before. He was not in the mood for sharing any of his stories regarding his dad, so he pressed on with her stories. "Is that why you're always chewing on your fingernails?" He

asked and Hope laughed this time, the only person who ever called her out on chewing on her fingernails was Steve. "The pain sometimes takes stress away." Hope shrugged, moving her sleeves down to cover her raw thumb nails, and horribly chewed on nails. "Sometimes the smoking too." She nodded. The food arrived a few minutes later and Hope inspected her plate before she felt she was satisfied that the food was laid out properly. They started to eat in a comfortable silence.

Billy wolfed down his burger and fries and was finished long before Hope was, he did not seem to mind waiting for Hope to finish which she appreciated. Once the bill was paid for the two got up and walked out of the restaurant. They decided to split the bill. Hope didn't mind, and Billy seemed pleased. He lit a cigarette the moment they were by his car and handed it to Hope who took it with a smile. "Thanks." She told him while he was lighting another one. She walked around to the passenger side of the car and got into it. Billy was already in his seat, and he was starting the car. "Where to now?" He asked, a smoke cloud billowing out of his mouth. "The quarry?" Hope suggested, a smirk growing on her face. She was staring ahead but she could feel his eyes on her. He did not say another word. He immediately backed out of the parking lot of the diner and a few minutes later they were parked at the quarry.

They were lying on the hood of Billy's car, making out. He was leaning over her body. Hope could feel his dick expanding in his jeans every time their bodies touched. His tongue played with hers, sometimes gently but most times it was rough. He wanted in and Hope could feel it as his hand made its way slowly down her pants, finding the edge of her panties, he slowly entered a finger into her hole. She gasped as her vagina walls closed in on his finger and he started to pump his finger in and out and she bit down on his neck to stop from crying out. Hope reached down for his jeans and unzipped them. His boxers, which were just as tight as his jeans, held his package firmly. Hope gripped him over the boxers, and he groaned slightly. He was about to pull down Hope's pants so he could access her more easily, but Hope felt something odd happen inside her and before she knew it, Billy had been thrown off her body by an invisible force. His back slammed on the ground a few feet away from the car.

Hope sat up and immediately felt a warm liquid ooze out of her nose as she sat up in complete shock, wondering what the hell just happened.

15. Magnetic

Magnetic

“Fuck.” Hope whispered to herself as she scrambled off the hood of the car.

Billy was already getting up. He was a little winded, but his eyes darted around furiously, trying to find the source that managed to throw and knock him on his back. Hope managed to get to Billy just as he planted his feet firmly on the ground. “What the fuck is going on?” Billy cried out wildly. Still whipping his head back and forth until his eyes landed on the brunette girl in front of him. He had a fire in his eyes which made her take a step back, but he noticed she was bleeding. “Shit, you’re bleeding, did I do that?” He asked in a hurried tone. He quickly made his way back to the car and started digging in the glove compartment for napkins which he found next to the first aid kit. He kept them for the nights that Neil swung too harshly and kicked him out and he needed to do a little mending.

He handed Hope a napkin and she took it and wiped her nose. The crimson liquid seeped through the white material quickly. “I think we should go.” Hope managed to choke out. She was looking anywhere but at him. He nodded in agreement and started the car quickly. She curled up into herself in the passenger seat and Billy noticed she was picking at the skin on her fingers. She was staring straight ahead and he, for the life of him, could not figure out what was running through her mind.

Billy quickly lit a cigarette, and he reversed and sped back up the road to civilization.

After he had taken a few drags of the cigarette he broke the dreadful silence in the car. The only sound he could hear was her picking at her skin and her shallow breathing and it was driving him insane. She looked like she was about to pass out.

He thought about the other day at school when Tina’s locker had slammed shut on its own. Hope had been staring daggers at him, he wondered if she was maybe even plotting his murder. The locker had

swung shut, nearly cutting off his fingers which were casually leaning against the open frame, and just as she had turned her head away from him, he had noticed the blood dribble from her nose. When he found her in the bathroom he could see her nose had been bleeding so he knew he hadn't imagined it.

He knew he couldn't say anything at the moment. Maybe it would trigger something in her and she would do it again, but he was slowly putting the pieces together and his conclusion was that there was something really fucked up about this girl he felt so connected too.

Why was it always the weirdos? He thought to himself before he opened his mouth.

"Are you okay?" He asked, he took his right hand off the steering wheel and attempted to place it onto her thigh in an attempt to calm her down. She just recoiled further away from him and he wondered if she was scared of him at this point? She scared of him. He scoffed softly at the thought if anything he should be running for the hills.

They continued the drive, in silence, and as Billy pulled up in front of Hope's house, he stopped the car and faced her. She looked at him, well barely. She was looking at him, but Billy guessed she was probably looking right through him.

"I'm guessing whatever happened tonight has something to do with that shit that happened the other weekend, that no one can tell me about?" He rolled his eyes at the last part. She was still staring right through him and he cleared his throat and continued. "But will you tell me if you're in trouble?" He asked, his gaze shifted to the house, he silently prayed that no one would interrupt them. She hesitated, she opened her mouth and closed it again. She cleared her throat and shook her head. "No trouble. Just tired." She responded, flatly. It frustrated him to his core. She opened the car door and Billy watched her carefully as she got out. It was like she was a completely different person. She had shut him out in the space of 20 minutes, and he didn't like it. "Hope." He called after her as she walked up to the house.

She was about to have a full-blown panic attack which she couldn't let him see. She couldn't let him see her at her weakest, Hell if it

were up to her no one, not even Dustin would see her that way but since he lived a room away from her, he'd often hear her through the walls and then he'd come running, brown bag in hand, reminding her to breathe. Her head was spinning. She'd flung a, what was Billy? She didn't know his weight but anyway she flew a 17-year-old mass of muscle with her mind after a flicker of a thought crossed it - that they might be moving too fast - but in actual fact she knew she wanted it to happen. She was tired and wanted a little fun and if he could make her feel the way she felt in the parking lot at the middle school and that was without even having an orgasm she was curious to see how he'd make her feel if he did give her one.

He called her name as she got to the front door, about to open it with shaky hands. She breathed a jagged breath before she ignored him and continued into the house, slamming the door behind her, leaning against it, and collapsing into a heap.

Dustin had heard the thump when Hope crashed to the floor. He poked his head out of the kitchen. "Oh shit." He cried and ran over to his sister who had passed out. Before calling for his mom for help he checked her scar. Just to make sure that none of this shit had to do with the mind flayer. Her scar was normal, well as normal as a scar, you'd get from an inter dimensional creature ripping through your veins, would be. He felt her head, the way their mom did when either one complained they weren't feeling well. It was hot, hotter than normal. Did she have a temperature? "MOM" He yelled down the hallway in a panicked tone and his mom came hurrying up the passage and cried out when she saw Hope.

When Hope woke up a few hours later she found herself in a familiar setting. The fluorescent light above her head made her squint her green eyes as she adjusted them to the brightness. She groaned and put her hand up to cover her face but slightly tugged on the needle that was pushed into her skin. She groaned again. "Oh honey!" She heard her mom's voice coo next to her, taking her hand. "Okay Henderson's" The doctor's voice boomed when he entered the room and he smiled when he saw Hope was awake this time. "We have her test results." He was saying to Claudia as Hope started to lift herself up. "Some dehydration but mostly high blood pressure." He stated

and pointed at Hope in a stern way. "Whatever she'd been doing prior to the collapse had risen her blood pressure to extreme heights which caused her to pass out. You're going to have to keep a close eye on her blood pressure from now on, Mrs. Henderson." He smiled kindly at Hope who was glaring back at him. She knew there was nothing medically wrong with her. Well perhaps medically but nothing this hospital could help her out with. Claudia scolded her daughter for the way she was looking at the doctor who was only doing his job and trying to help. "Thanks Dr Jensen. Please mind my daughter, you know, the teenage hormones." Claudia waved her hand dismissively in Hope's direction and Hope scoffed.

"Can I go home now?" Hope asked for the millionth time the next morning. She had to stay the night at the hospital to her dismay. She hated hospitals and she didn't want to spend another minute in one. "Yes dear, your mother and brother are waiting for you in the reception area. Here's your clothes so you can change." The nurse said to Hope with a smile spread across her face. Hope smiled slightly back at her and took her clothes from the lady and went to the bathroom to change.

Once she had changed out of the hospital gown and into her own clothes, she met her mother and brother in the reception area. "You gave us quite a scare there honey." Claudia Henderson said to her daughter, while putting her arm around her shoulders to steer her out of the hospital. "I'm fine." Hope said flatly. Dustin eyed her out from the other side of their mother. "I just want to get out of here." She added. "Okay, once we're home, I will make us some pancakes while you little missy, rest." She points a finger at Hope and Hope frowned in her mother's direction and Dustin caught the look of discontent.

When the Henderson's arrived home Hope immediately went to her room while her mom busied herself in the kitchen. Hope tried to close her door, but Dustin's hand stopped her midway. "What's going on?" Dustin asked her, seriously. His eyes never left Hope's face while he searched for answers. "We need to have an emergency party meeting." Hope stated hurriedly. She threw her hands in the air, exasperated. "I have something I need to tell you guys, something I should have told you guys sooner." She cried and Dustin nodded. He

hurried out of her room and into his own one grabbing the walkie talkie. Hope was looking out her bedroom window when Dustin returned. "Shit, my car is still at the arcade." She remembered, slamming her left hand into her forehead in annoyance. "Why is it at the arcade? Who dropped you home last night?" Dustin asked, his one eyebrow raised while he fiddled with the knobs on the walkie talkie. She kept quiet. "Hope?" He asked again, looking up at her now. She was biting her thumb, hard. "Hope." Dustin pulled her finger away from her mouth and she sighed, sitting down on the bed.

"I was with Billy last night." Hope confessed and Dustin rolled his eyes. "Something happened, something bad." She continued and he stopped fiddling with the knobs on the radio, his eyes wide and frightened. "Did he do something to you? That son-of-a-bitch..." Dustin's words ripped through the air, loudly. Hope quickly shook her head and shook her arms around frantically to quieten him down. "Shush." She reprimanded him and he frowned. "I did something to him." She added and Dustin looked up at her again. "Why are you being so vague, just tell me already?" He asked. Hope could sense the frustration emitting from Dustin. "I'll tell you when everyone's together. I mean we need everyone, even El." Hope said to Dustin who nodded and started to speak into the radio. He stopped abruptly as Lucas's voice crackled over the static. "How are we going to get there, without your car and without Mom noticing?" He asked and Hope responded, "We'll use your bike and climb out the window." She stated, pointing her index finger to the only window in her room.

Dustin asked Lucas to contact Mike and advise Mike that they were all to meet at the Wheeler's residence as soon as possible Mike was out of range for Dustin and Lucas lived closer. "Copy that, over." Lucas responded before he signed off. Dustin contacted Will next and told him to bring Jonathan. Steve had been given a radio by the party well by Dustin. Dustin and Steve had grown weirdly close since the whole Dart thing had happened. "Steve. Urgent meeting at Mikes. Now." Dustin informed Steve who coughed on the other side. "Will you be able to fetch us?" He added, hopeful. Hope nodded in agreement to Dustin's question and Steve chuckled. "Sure. What's this about?" He asked. "We'll tell you on the way." Dustin responded and clicked the button off. "Better than biking." He said, with a shrug and Hope nodded. "Who have we forgotten?" Hope asked now, opening

up her window, ready for their escape. "Max." Dustin remembered. He got through to her eventually when Steve pulled up outside. "Mandatory party meeting at Mike's house Madmax. Meet us there?" He asked and Max sighed. "Sure stalker. What's this about?" She asked now. They heard whispering on the other side, but Max told the person to shush. "Hope." He responded. "Are you with Lucas?" He asked now, wondering who she was whispering too. "Uh... Yeah. Sure. We'll see you there." The radio went static again.

They climbed into Steve's car and Dustin told Steve to drive before their mom noticed anything suspicious. "So what's this about, Henderson's?" His eyes flickered quickly from Hope to Dustin in the back seat. Dustin pointed at Hope. Steve quickly glanced back at Hope now. She was picking at her fingernails. "Hope?" He questioned and Hope turned to look at Steve. "Let's get everyone together." She ended. They turned onto the Wheeler's street now and saw Lucas biking at superspeed. "Lucas." Dustin yelled out the window and Steve slowed down and came to a stop next to the kid who had stopped peddling. "Can I get in?" He asked Steve who nodded. Lucas put his Bike into Steve's boot and climbed into the back with Dustin. "Where's Max? She said she was with you?" Dustin asked curiously and Lucas shook his head. "Not with me. We had another fight." Lucas informed Dustin who scoffed. Hope and Steve also chuckled. "You two are the worst." Steve advised as they rounded the corner into the cul-de-sac where the Wheeler's lived.

They parked in the driveway and Nancy Wheeler opened the front door. "What is this about?" She asked, the question directed at Hope, panic hinted in her voice. "Oh my God. I'll tell everyone at the same time. We all need to be to..." Hope was cut off by the sound of a familiar car engine. The Camaro. She turned her head just as the blue car parked and Max got out. "Ugh, not this guy again." Steve said, rolling his eyes and heading into the house with Dustin, who was darting his eyes from Hope to Billy. Billy stayed in the car. Hope and Billy locked eyes as Max came up to the two girls. He was drumming his fingers on the steering wheel, but he made no move to drive away or no move to get out. Max approached Hope. "Uh... Billy won't leave until he knows what happening. He's fucking tired of being left out of everything, he fucking drove us that night for Christ sake. He deserves to know." Max turned her head back to Billy who Hope was

still staring at. "Those are his exact words, excuse the profanity." Max apologised. "He does deserve to know Hope." She added with a short nod. "I don't know how much longer I can go with lying or making up excuses." She ended and her gaze shifted back to Hope who was still having a sort of stare down with Billy. Hope tore her eyes away from Billy, lifted her head to the sky with her eyes closed and exhaled loudly, defeated.

There were a few reasons why Billy couldn't know what was going on. Number one, they had signed NDA's with the lab and if they were to blab about it to anyone they would be thrown in jail – Jim Hopper's words. This was one of the main reasons. The other reasons were the fact that Hope wanted to keep him out of it, so he was safe. Another reason was that she had no idea what was happening with her so she couldn't really tell him anything even if she wanted to, but she was tired. She was about to tell everyone anyway and Lucas had told Max about it and nothing happened. So what was one more person?

"Fine." Hope conceded. She nodded in his direction. He took his car key out of the ignition, opened the door, closed, and locked the car and sauntered over to the girls. Nancy groaned before ushering Max inside. "Don't make me regret this." Hope advised Billy, once they were alone. He gently tilted her head up to face him and placed a kiss on her lips. "I'm glad you're okay." He spoke softly, after releasing her. "Yeah well, let's see how you feel about me after confessional, come on." Hope took his hand, and they made their way into the house. "Ah Billy." Karen Wheeler breathed seductively when Hope and Billy entered the house. She was about to take some milk and cookies to the kids, Steve, Nancy and hopefully Jonathan was already here. Billy chuckled, "Mrs. Wheeler. Lovely to see you again." He stated, his charm and confidence oozing through his words. Hope eyed the two out, wordlessly and confused. Karen hadn't even greeted Hope yet but when she saw Billy and Hope's hands clasped together, she looked up at Hope and smiled. "Hi Hope. How are you feeling? Nance told us about your hospital scare..." Karen said, and Hope continued to stare between Billy and Karen. Billy noticed Hope's stare and he chuckled again, "That night when you guys were at the Byers I came here, looking for Max but Mrs Wheeler graciously told me that Mike was at the Byers, she gave me the address." He

informed Hope. "Yeah..." She mused and tilted her head in his direction and rolled her eyes. "I'm feeling a lot better, *Mrs.* Wheeler, thanks." Hope said, looking back at Karen Wheeler and emphasizing the word *Mrs.*" She heard Billy chuckle next to her. Hope let go of his hand and opened the basement door and wondered down the steps, Billy followed closely behind her. "Do I sense some jealousy?" He quietly asked behind her and Hope scoffed. "I've just never seen you act like that before..." She told him honestly and he chuckled again.

"No, what the hell is he doing here, shouldn't he just drop Max off and leave?" Steve cried out, nearly pulling his hair out in frustration. "He helped us out that night the gate was closed. He deserves to know the truth too and if Lucas could tell Max the truth, why can't I tell Billy?" Hope advised the party, everyone kept quiet. "El is also here." Mike broke the tension in the air. Hope looked around to see where Eleven was to introduce her to Billy, but Mike waved the radio in the air. "Hopper wouldn't let her leave so she's here in spirit and voice." Mike nodded. Hope could feel Billy's eyes on her. He didn't stop staring at her while she started to speak. "Okay so how do I put this..." Hope said, looking at everyone around her. "Go on Hope, they'll understand." Eleven spoke now and everyone looked at the radio. "She knows?" Dustin spoke now, staring at his sister in confusion. Hope sighed. "Hope has powers... like me." Eleven spoke again when she realized that Hope was struggling coming to terms with the news she was about to tell.

The basement door opened, and Karen Wheeler started to speak down the stairs. Hope's eyes darted to the door then back again while everyone remained silent. The door slammed shut on its own as panic and annoyance swirled in her body. "Ow." Karen Wheeler spoke, it was muffled through the door, but everyone heard it.

Hope hastily wiped at her nose as she felt the dribble.

Dustin gaped at her and Billy stepped backwards, away from her. .

The rest of the party was quiet.

"What happened?" El asked but no one said a word.

16. Reeling and Dealing

Reeling and Dealing

A loud knock made the party stare back at the door. “Mike! Why is this door locked?” Karen Wheeler’s muffled voice was heard as she tried to turn the doorknob. “For privacy, Mom!” Mike yelled back, annoyed that his mother was even trying to get involved in the meeting. He hadn’t locked the door though and he was sure none of the others had. He presumed it had been Hope when she slammed it shut with her mind. “It’s not locked, just jammed.” Hope advised and Mike along with the others looked at her, shocked.

“Awesome.” Dustin breathed out, after a few moments of silence, staring at his sister, his eyes sparkled with glee.

“Hope locked the door with her mind.” Mike spoke now, in a hushed tone, just in case his mother was eavesdropping, when Eleven cleared her throat reminding everyone that she had asked a question.

“Her powers are tied with her emotions.” Eleven informed everyone, “Like mine but I can teach her how to use them the way Kali taught me.” She added. “Kali?” Nancy asked now, looking around at everyone to see if anyone knew who Kali was. “She was with me in the lab.” Eleven advised.

Hope heard Billy breath out behind her. He had moved a few steps back and was no longer a tan shade, he was pale, as pale as the white shirt he was wearing.

“Look, if you don’t think you can...” Hope started to ask him, but he shook his head and pointed to the brown leather couch. He sat down and closed his eyes. Hope looked back at the older teens. Steve was smirking, he had never seen Hargrove look like that before and it actually made himself feel good. Like even the big tough guys got scared.

“Can’t handle this, Hargrove?” Steve asked, folding his arm across his chest, and raising an eyebrow. “I just need a minute.” Billy responded, clenching his teeth in the process. “This.” Steve motioned

to Hope, “is news to all of us, you haven’t even heard the best of it, like how come Will went missing, why we were at the Byers house in the first place, why we went into a random tunnel in the pumpkin fields, why Hope and Eleven have powers?” Steve went on and on and Hope shot him a look of annoyance. “If he can’t handle this news, how’s he going to handle the rest?” Steve turned his head in Hope’s direction, the question meant for her.

Billy breathed. He was about to pummel Harrington. Smartass thinking Billy couldn’t handle shit. Billy could handle anything but when it came to supernatural things, he was sceptical. Who could blame him? To him, Ghosts didn’t exist, neither did aliens, but two no three girls with superpowers roaming the Earth did? It was a lot to process.

Hope sat next to Billy on the couch. He felt her presence before she sat down as his eyes were still closed. “If you need time, I can tell you about everything else another day?” She asked him. “I didn’t believe it either until I actually saw one of the demo-dogs.” Max interjected, informing Billy. Lucas nodded. “She was so sure it was a bear we fought.” Lucas rolled his eyes and Max glared at him. Billy opened his eyes and focused on Max. He chuckled when he saw Max giving Lucas a death stare.

Bang, Bang, Bang.

“Mike, Nancy, I’ve got some snacks for you guys.” Karen Wheeler voiced up the stairs. Mike rolled his eyes. “Not now mom!” He called up. “Why are the older kids down there with you guys, I know none of them play dungeons and dragons.” She continued and Hope rolled her eyes. She was still annoyed with Mrs Wheeler, the way she had acted around Billy. Like a young schoolgirl meeting her crush for the first time. She was annoyed with Billy for reciprocating the flirting but right now she couldn’t take anything out on Billy because he was still processing the news he’d just heard.

She couldn’t understand why she was acting like a jealous girlfriend because she wasn’t one, but Mrs. Wheeler needed to be put in her place. They heard a thud then a clatter of cutlery. “Oh shoot.” Mrs Wheeler spoke from up the stairs. “Never mind. Something weird is going on here today.” Karen exclaimed before walking away from the

door.

Billy looked over at Hope. She was concentrating on a piece of loose thread on Billy's shirt and the blood poured again from her nose. "If Hope's powers are tied to her emotions, why is Mrs Wheeler her target?" Dustin asked Eleven, curiously, his eyes never leaving his sisters face.

"She's just... not getting the hint." Hope advised, grabbing a tissue from the box on the table to the left. She wiped the blood away. Billy grabbed his box of cigarettes and shuffled one out and put it between his lips ready to light it "Uh, you can't do that in here." Nancy pointed out to him and he sighed and took the cigarette between his index finger and his thumb, away from his mouth, looking at Nancy with a bored expression. "Where do you propose I do smoke, Wheeler?" He asked her, sarcastically but, with the same bored expression on his face. "Oh my god." Nancy commented and rolled her eyes, Hope could tell she was getting annoyed. "Cut it out, Hargrove, do you have to smoke at this very second?" Jonathan asked now. Steve was smirking at the situation unravelling. He watched as Hope closed her eyes and exhaled through her nose. "Come on." She stated, getting up and pulling Billy by his hand to get up too. "Let's go outside, so you calm down." Hope added, motioning her hand up the stairs.

Billy got up reluctantly, still staring at Jonathan. "What are you smiling at Harrington?" He mused once his eyes shifted to Steve. "Oh my god Billy, I told you not to make me regret this." Hope cried now as Steve and Billy had the weirdest stare down ever. Billy's eyes shifted to Hope's. "How do you suppose I react to finding out that my girlfriend has superpowers, hmm?" He spat at her, closing his eyes in annoyance or avoidance. Hope didn't know. The only word she heard from that statement was girlfriend. Her eyes went wide. Did Billy realize what he just said? Steve's eyes widened too and so did Dustin's his mouth was hanging open with added effect. Nancy scoffed but, Jonathan, Mike, Lucas, Max, and Will kept quiet, watching Hope.

"I'm going to smoke." He stated, He left the basement, and walked back up the stairs. He turned around when he was at the top half expecting Hope to be following him. She wasn't. "Are you coming?"

He called to her and she looked at the rest of the party before she nodded quickly and followed him out.

Mrs Wheeler was cleaning up the mess she'd made, or well the mess Hope made her make. "You kids leaving already?" She asked as she looked up at Billy and Hope. "We just need to talk." Hope told Mrs Wheeler without looking at her. She was looking at the back of Billy.

When they were outside the house in the front yard, Billy lit his cigarette, inhaled, exhaled, and then stared at Hope. He handed her the smoke, she took it carefully, watching him.

"I don't think you're ready to hear about everything else." She told him with a curt nod. He sighed as Hope handed the cigarette back after taking a drag. They shared the cigarette in silence for the next few minutes. "Maybe you should tell me everything when the others aren't around, I can't take Harington smirking like he knows shit, Wheeler scoffing at everything I say and Byers just being Byers. It's driving me insane. I don't owe them shit and neither do they. You, however, owe me the explanation so maybe another day." He got up, "You guys can bring Max back later." He added before sauntering over to his car.

"Are we just going to ignore the fact that you called me your girlfriend down there and now you don't even want to be apart of the party?" Hope asked him. She couldn't hold it in any longer. He looked at his wristwatch and then back at Hope. "I'm going to be late. I have an interview at the community pool to be a lifeguard." He ignored her question. He was infuriating. "Billy." She cried out, stomping her foot like a small child having a tantrum. "What Hope? What do you want me to say? You've just dropped this fucking shit on me, and I don't know how to react to it. I can't help it that everyone in that house is crazy, that they just expect weird shit to happen all day every day." His voice had risen, and he pointed to the Wheeler house.

Hope swallowed and nodded. "You wanted to know." She pointed out softly, his blue eyes went grey. He nodded and laughed sadistically. "Yeah, I know, and I've come to the conclusion that everyone here is a whack job and the Wheeler's are clumsy shits with tight door frames and my girlfriend might have a drug problem with the way

her nose bleeds.” He was close to yelling now. He closed his eyes. He breathed in deeply and opened them again and spoke in a calmer manner. “I don’t know what to think Hope, I just need time to think.” He rummaged in his car and pulled out her car keys. She’d not realized that she’d left them in his car that night. He could see the swirling storm raging in her eyes as he handed the keys back to her. She took them and as their fingers grazed, sparks shot through her body and he must’ve felt it too because he groaned. He didn’t say anything else though he just backed away and climbed back into his car.

She didn’t watch him drive away she turned on her heel and marched back inside the house slamming the front door behind her, her car keys dangling in her left hand while her right hand covered her chest.

She leaned against the front door and closed her eyes with a sigh. He’d made her regret involving him.

Nancy poked her head out the door of the basement and looked at Hope leaning against the door with her eyes closed. Alone. “You okay?” She asked, casually. Hope opened her eyes and looked at Nancy. Pretty Nancy. Had everything easy. Hope nodded slightly. “He left, something about an interview.” Hope informed Nancy half the truth before following her down the stairs.

“Where’s Hargrove?” Steve asked, he didn’t really care he just wanted to know. Hope glared at him. “Why do you care? You’re one of the reasons he left.” She spat and then grabbed the radio from Mike.

She spoke quietly to Eleven for a while as the rest of the party hung around. Eleven and Hope decided that the next Sunday after her early morning shift at the arcade they’d meet to start her training in the afternoon. Hope handed the radio back to Mike once she was done.

“Hope” Karen Wheeler called from upstairs. “I have your mother on the line. She’s threatening to call Jim Hopper if you don’t go home now.” Karen spoke. Hope frowned and stared at Dustin. “We better go, I need to go get my car from the arcade first.” She informed Dustin who nodded. Hope gulped and looked at Steve who seemed to be sulking. She forgot that he was their ride. He looked up at her, but

she could see he wasn't being friendly. "I'll take you, because I'm a nice guy and I like your brother." He stated before they all left the basement.

The ride to the arcade was awkward and silent. Hope picked at her fingernails and stared out the window. Steve and Dustin kept sharing glances in the rear-view mirror. Once they reached the parking lot Hope practically sprinted out of the car after saying thanks to Steve. Dustin had to run to get to the car so Hope wouldn't speed off.

When the two Henderson's reached home Claudia was waiting for them on porch. "I thought I told you to rest." She scolded Hope who smiled apologetically. "I really wanted to get my car, but Steve had to pop past Nancy's first." Hope lied, still with a smile plastered on her face. Claudia's rolled her eyes. "You should have told me. I would have taken you to get it even though you really shouldn't be driving right now." They were in the house by now and Dustin had run off to his bedroom. "I'm sorry mom." Hope said.

She was sorry.

In her haste she'd probably just ruined her first ever relationship that she didn't even know she was in and her friendship with Steve.

17. Emotions

Summary for the Chapter:

It's nearly Summer

Billy got the job at the community pool and he does something he doesn't do, ever - apologize - but in his way

Hope and El meet up to start training

Notes for the Chapter:

We're nearly in Season 3. Woohoo

Thanks to everybody who is sticking around while I put this story together, I love the feedback.

Emotions

It had been a week since Eleven had told the party about Hope's powers.

There were two weeks left of school and then Summer would start. Hope couldn't wait and since today she was starting her training with El she was all the more anxious to get off from her shift at the arcade.

Dustin decided he wanted to come with El and Hope to witness Hope's powers at full capacity. If she could even do that yet. She didn't know how to control it she just somehow knew that it was definitely linked to her emotions.

She hadn't spoken to Billy in a week either. He was avoiding her

everywhere. She stopped looking for him on Wednesday, figuring out that wherever she went he just went the opposite way, Hope didn't even see him in English class, something about him being in the sick room, according to Carol and Tommy behind her

Steve had also been annoying Hope for the past few days. She was trying to get him to accept the fact that she and Billy were possibly dating but he wouldn't give in. He would constantly put Billy in a bad light which to Hope, wasn't solving any problems.

"I mean, he could at least just give Billy a chance you know?" Hope told Keith that morning while she worked her shift at the arcade. Keith grunted and shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know man, somehow I feel like Harrington's the better guy in this situation." Keith advised Hope. Hope sighed and shook her head.

She went back to counting the quarters when she heard the bell go off as someone entered. She looked over at Dustin who was playing dig dug and then noticed the shine of red hair as Max joined Dustin by the machine. Dustin was trying to beat Max's high score and she smirked at him when she saw that he was still far behind.

Hope moved her head to outside the arcade. She could see the Camaro, possibly idling, wondering if it should stay or go. Apologise or not. Hope breathed out a defeated sigh and placed the coins down on the counter. "I'll be right back." Keith waved her off and Hope walked to the main door and pushed it open with one hand, the bell ringing in the process.

She eyed him out, leaning coolly against the car, smoking a cigarette. He was staring at the ground, deep in thought.

“Hey.” Max spoke behind her and Hope turned around to look at the red head. “Uh... He’s still processing this.” She motions her hands towards Hope. “I don’t think he fully believes us yet, kind of like I didn’t believe it until I saw it.” She added with a nod and Hope smiled slightly at Max. “Thanks.” Hope’s voice was small. “Do I give him more space?” Hope asked. She didn’t know why she was asking a thirteen-year-old for relationship advice, but Max seemed to know a lot more about Billy than she did. Max shook her head quickly. “He won’t come back if you give him more space.” Max told Hope who turned her head back in Billy’s direction. “If you want him in your life you need to fight for him. He gives up way too easily because he’s so stubborn.” Max ended with a smile before heading back to Dustin.

Hope breathed in deeply and breathed out again. She stepped out onto the sidewalk. She made her way over to Billy and cleared her throat to announce her arrival. He looked up at her and put his cigarette out with the toe of his boot. “Hi.” Hope spoke, she suddenly felt confident, like she could do anything, Max’s words replaying in her mind, *‘fight for him if you want him in your life’*. She stepped closer to him and he watched her, carefully. She smiled at him. “Are you done avoiding me?” She asked him, the sunlight flickered in her eyes. She was much closer to him now. She could see the stubble on his chin and around his mouth. She could feel his warmth, his natural warmth, radiating from his body.

His mouth slowly turned up into smirk as she lightly rubbed the palm of her hand up his arm. His eyes flickered to her lips and then back to the brilliant green that was her eyes.

He needed the week to think but now that she was standing in front of him, willing to be this close to him after the horrible things he’d said last weekend which he had played over and over again in his head, he knew he should have just accepted her for who she is and not wasted this time being an asshole because by the looks of it she wasn’t going anywhere.

He leaned his forehead down and their foreheads touched. She pulled him into a hug, her arms holding tightly around his waist as he circled his arms around her neck and pulled her closer to him. She pulled her head away from his chest and looked up at him. "I'm sorry for how things went down." She stated and he nodded and leaned down to place his lips on hers. "I'm done being an asshole." He added with a nod after they'd pulled away from the kiss. It was his own way of apologising. Billy couldn't recall the last time he said sorry and he wasn't about to start now.

"Ugh. Why is this the second time I'm watching them kiss?" Dustin moaned from inside the arcade next to Max. He turned his head in the opposite direction. They wanted to see what would happen with Hope and Billy. If an explosive fight would happen or even some yelling. They both didn't expect this. "Why have you been spying on your sister and my brother, stalker?" Max's eyebrow was raised, and Dustin scoffed. The nickname annoyed him, but it seemed to fit with her current statement. "Uh actually Keith walked in on them the first time and I just happened to be standing behind that counter." He pointed to the actual counter he was standing behind. Max rolled her eyes. "God, you're so dramatic. It's just a kiss." She turned her head back to the teenagers and gagged when she saw Billy squeeze Hope's bum. "Anyway, back to playing dig dug?" She asked, turning her head towards the machine.

"So, uh... what are you doing this afternoon?" Billy asked, as Hope pulled away from their embrace, ready to get back to her job.

"Umm..." She stammered. Billy watched her as her eyes darted to the arcade and then back to him.

"I've actually got training with El." She whispered. Billy's eyes widened. He nodded and grabbed his box of cigarettes from his pocket and lit another one. "Do you and Max want to come? I could use the support?" The words were out of her mouth before she could

stop herself. Now she just needed to wait for his response. "Dustin's coming." She added, for more of a push. "Max didn't believe in all this shit either but once she came face to face with a demo-dog she got the gist of it so maybe if you..." She continued and Billy interrupted, "Maybe if I see you in action, I'll believe you guys?" He asked and Hope shrugged, a hopeful smile formed on her face. He looked at his cigarette and then looked back her smile. She had all the hope in her eyes. He sighed.

"You do remember I've actually been a target for your powers, right?" He asked, he air quoted around the word powers and Hope chuckled. "Look, this time will be different. I'm going to have someone there assisting me use them. I won't be using you for target practice." She eyed him curiously and he eventually gave in. "Fine. Just know that I'm going to be staying in the car for most of it." He told her but he smiled slightly. A little nervous.

"Oh by the way, I got the job at the community pool. I start the first week of Summer." He advised her and Hope smiled proudly at him. "I knew you'd get it." She told him and he chuckled. "Please, when I told you I was going for the interview you looked like you wanted to rip my head off." He said, chuckling slightly and Hope laughed as they walked back towards the arcade but shook her head. "No, I wanted to rip your head off because you're annoying." She pushed the door of the arcade open and they walked up to Max and Dustin.

"So, Billy and Max will be joining us for training this afternoon." Hope whispered to Dustin who looked at her wide eyed. "What? Why?" He asked, hurriedly. He looked at the stepsiblings who were standing awkwardly next to each other. "Billy deserves the truth and Max is really cool and gets to see me in action." She smiled at Dustin who frowned but slowly nodded as he understood. "Okay fine but didn't you already try telling him the truth?" He asked, Hope sighed. "I guess he's more a visual believer." Hope said and Dustin's frown faded, and he nodded. "Fine, when do we leave?" He asked, he wasn't in the mood to argue with Hope.

“In five minutes.” She stated and wandered back behind the counter.

El had spun some story to Hopper about why she needed to go to the Henderson house that afternoon. Something about needing a girl to talk to about Mike. Hopper caved straight away, glad that his ears wouldn't be bleeding all afternoon with girl talk. Plus he could sort of trust Hope. She was sometimes a shitty teenager who sometimes did shitty teenager things, but he knew could trust her with the kids and Claudia Henderson would most likely be there so that was an added safety factor.

When he rocked up at the Henderson's at two in the afternoon with El in the passenger seat beside him, he could feel the excitement almost pulsing from her body.

He saw the familiar blue Camaro. He's seen it driving around town like a maniac. He also remembered Hope with the owner of the vehicle in the parking lot at the middle school dance.

He frowned in its direction while he removed his seatbelt. “Wait here.” He grumbled to El who sighed. Hopper wrenched his door open and bounded up the steps to the porch and rapped on the door, roughly. Hope opened the door after the fourth knock.

“Hey Chief.” She said, a bright smile on her face. He looked at her, wearily.

“What's he doing here?” Is all he managed to growl out. “It's supposed to be girl's day.” He added and Hope looked at where Hopper was pointing. Billy's car.

“Uh, it is girls' day.” Hope responded with a nod. She turned her head back into the house. “Max.” She called out to the sassy red head who walked over from the lounge and stared at Hopper then back at

Hope. "Yeah?" She asked and Hope smiled back at Hopper. "See, girl's day. Billy is only dropping Max off." She lied. She had to lie. Hopper couldn't know about her powers yet.

He grunted something Hope couldn't hear before he waved for Eleven to come up. She was there in a shot and smiled at Max and then at Hope. "El!" Dustin called out happily when he saw his friend. He hugged her quickly before pulling away. "Okay, I'll be back to fetch her later." Hopper warned and Hope nodded. "Keep her safe." Hope rolled her eyes. "You know she can do that herself right?" She joked before clearing her throat at Hopper's death stare. He noticed Billy hovering around in the back. "And you, learn to drive the speed limit, I'm not afraid of giving out tickets." He pointed to Billy who looked up, alarmed. He nodded quickly and disappeared from Hoppers view.

Hope chuckled and they all said there goodbyes to Chief Hopper.

"You lie." El spoke now and Hope pointed at herself. El nodded. "The mouth breather is coming with us." She added and Hope looked over at Billy who was glaring at the back of El's head. "Mouth breather?" He questioned and Dustin sniggered, but Billy shot him a glare too. Hope smiled slightly, holding in a laugh. "El, Billy is my boyfriend." She informed her. "He is not a mouth breather." Hope added. "Boyfriend?" She questioned and looked from Billy, who had crossed his arms across his chest, then to Hope who was glancing back and forth from Billy to El.

Hope then nodded at El and walked over to Billy. She took his hand into hers. "Boyfriend." She showed El who nodded. "Like how you feel about Mike." Hope reminded her and she finally understood.

"But you're mean to Steve." She pointed out to Billy who raised his eyebrow. "How do you know that?" Hope asked her, removing her hand from Billy's, walking over to El. "Mike told me." She ended with

a nod. Hope scoffed. "Remind me to have a talk with your friend, Dustin." She shot at her brother who raised his hands in defence. "I know nothing."

"Okay so are we doing this thing or what?" Max asked, interrupting the awkwardness that followed the previous conversation.

"Yeah, remember what Hopper told you." She pointed at Billy who chuckled, half-heartedly. "I'm driving?" He asked and Hope nodded. The kids can sit in the back." She added and they left the Henderson house. As they were leaving Billy pulled Hope back towards him.

"It was kind of hot, you lying to a cop, to protect me." He whispered in her ear, his warm breath tickling her earlobe.

She giggled. "Come on, Hop's not stupid, he probably saw right through it." She said back to him and he laughed.

"So where are we heading?" Billy asked Hope who was sitting in the passenger seat beside him. He could see she was a bundle of nerves now. She was chewing on her thumb nail and jiggling her leg, anxiously.

"The junkyard." She and Dustin said it at the same time. She looked back at her brother and smiled.

"The junkyard." She repeated and Billy nodded and reversed the car.

18. Super Massive Black Hole

Summary for the Chapter:

Hope deals with her powers with help from Eleven.

Billy, Max and Dustin are along for the ride.

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm so sorry this chapter took forever. I had a bit of writers block but I seem to know where I want to go with this story for a few more chapters.

Thanks for reading and sticking with me :)

Super Massive Black Hole

When they arrived at the junkyard El led Hope up to the abandoned bus. Billy, Max, and Dustin stayed back at the car much to Dustin's dismay, but Billy forced the kid to stay back having been a previous target for Hope's powers and not wanting anyone to get hurt. "We can see perfectly fine from here." Billy explained to Dustin who groaned. "Easy for you to say. You're the one who's built like a tree." Dustin had mumbled but Billy overheard him and rolled his eyes.

"When Kali taught me, she said I must think of something that makes me angry. I thought of Papa." El started to say and Hope nodded. She chewed on her thumb, a bundle of nerves, needing a cigarette. She looked back and felt a little bit jealous when she saw Billy lying against the hood of his car smoking one. "Are you listening?" El asked now, she had raised an eyebrow when Hope looked back to the others. Hope cleared her throat and nodded again. "I've only ever used these abilities by accident. I've never openly tried before. I'm a little nervous." Hope informed Eleven who sighed. "It's okay. We can go slow." Eleven smiled, it made Hope relax a little. Hope took a deep breath before she put her eyes on a sheet of metal that Steve and Dustin had used to board up the bus the night they went hunting for Dart. She was going to yank it off, start small.

“Just think of something that makes me angry.” Hope said aloud and she stiffened. Thinking of her dad. Her deadbeat father who walked out on her mom. On the three of them. Dustin doesn’t even know him. He left when Dustin was a baby. Having multiple affairs. Bringing one home which ended it all when they walked in on them in a horrific position for children to see. Her mom crying constantly in the night-time keeping Hope awake.

Hope fidgeted. Eleven noticed. Hope hadn’t even raised a finger and there was screeching from the bus rims along the dirt. Some dust had started to billow too. “You’re doing it.” El whispered next to her. The bus was slowly moving closer to them.

“Woah.” Dustin exclaimed when he noticed the bus moving. “Is it Hope or Eleven doing that?” Max asked, lifting her head higher so she can see better, taking a few steps forward. Billy also stood up now, eyes transfixed on the brunette girl ahead of him. He took two steps forward too, in line with Max. The three of them stared at the immense power right in front of them. Mouths agape. Dustin drooling a little.

Hope felt herself get angrier and angrier as she thought of her dad. Thought of the amount of times she tried to get into contact with him. Even driving out to Chicago to try and see him, seeing him leave an office building and get into a fancy town car, suit clad. Briefcase in hand. Smiling at a little girl that had got into the backseat with him. Take your daughter to work day by the looks of it.

The sheet of metal started to tear away from the bus. Hope felt the blood trickle down her nose, into her mouth. She wiped at it quickly with the sleeve of her cardigan. The bus was still moving, slowly, another piece of metal was coming loose. “Hope...” Eleven warned as the sheet of metal pulled from the bus and flew into the air. Eleven put out her hand and shoved the metal away from them, the sheet flew over them, hurtling towards the others. It missed the Camaro by an inch and Billy’s eyes were wide. The other sheet of metal was clanking into the bus. Trying to come free. “Hope...” Eleven said again, her one eye on the sheet of metal but her main focus on Hope who was starting to lose control. Her hands were shaking, and she had started to twitch. Hope’s eyes became small. She was frowning. “FUCK YOU!” She yelled at no one, but the other sheet of metal came

free and was once again hurtling towards them. El swatted again and the sheet flew to the other side. Unable to control where it landed because she was trying to control Hope. Luckily, it went to the other side of the field, nowhere near the Camaro. Tears were dripping down Hope's face. El grabbed Hope's shaking hand and pulled them backwards as the bus continued to come towards them, speed picking up. "Hope, come on!" Dustin was calling, he could see his sister breaking down.

Hope fell to her knees as her energy was drained. The bus stopped moving. There was only silence in the air apart from Hope's agonizing sobs. Dustin ran up to the two girls and knelt in front of Hope. Her head was buried in her hands and blood oozed through her fingers. He shook her slightly and she looked at him through blood-stained fingers. She closed her eyes and suddenly got up, she ran into the woods and didn't look back. "HOPE!" Dustin called after her, but she disappeared, and Billy and Max came forward. Billy running to the edge of the forest but losing sight of her almost immediately. "What the fuck was that?" Billy rounded on El who looked up at the blonde-haired boy who was scowling. "Too much emotion." Eleven stated and Billy's frown deepened. "What does that mean?" He asked and looked at Dustin who was also confused.

"I told her to think of something that makes her angry." Said Eleven "What do you think it would have been?" She turns her head in Dustin's direction. "She's got unresolved issues with daddy dearest." Dustin spoke now, staring into the woods where his sister disappeared. "I never knew him it doesn't bother me that much. She on the other hand was older and witnessed it all." Dustin continued. Billy stared at the 14-year-old boy who was speaking like a grown up. Like he'd lived a long life. "I've heard her, and mom speak about him sometimes. When they think I'm asleep, but mom usually stops the conversation. One time they got into a huge fight because she went to see him in Chicago without telling anyone." Dustin looked at Billy now who kept looking back to where Hope had disappeared. "I'm going to go look for her, you guys stay here." Dustin said now and Billy scoffed and shook his head. "I don't think so. You little shit birds need to stay here. I'll go. If anything she breaks a rib of mine, you guys it could be all the bones in your body." Billy states and Dustin frowns. "She can't hurt me." Eleven adds and Billy looks down

at the girl and back at the forest. "Sure, okay you can come. Max, Dustin, you guys stay here. Look after the car, see if she comes back."

Dustin was still frowning when El and Billy went off into the woods.

"Are we seriously just going to wait here for them?" Dustin asked while Max made her way to the car. "The thing I know about Billy is, you best do what he says otherwise he loses his shit and, we don't need that right now. Do you have your radio?" She called. Billy had left the keys in the ignition, so she turned on the car and some music played through the speakers. Dustin nodded and pointed to the backseat. Max rummaged around and found it in his backpack and handed it to him. "Gather the party. I rate Hope's going to need all the help she can get once they find her." Max ended and Dustin nodded and started to turn the dials to get into contact with Will. He was the closest in range.

"Hope?" Billy called out into the quiet forest surroundings. El was listening intently to everything going on around them. A snap of a twig, a call of a bird, trying to listen out for sobs or anything relating to that.

They came across trees that had been uprooted. Obviously, her rage had continued into the forest. El put her hand out to stop Billy from going any further when they eventually saw the brunette teenager, standing in a clearing, her head tilted up to the sky with her eyes closed. Breathing deeply.

El took a slow step forward but a twig crunched loudly under her boot. Hope's head snapped back, and she was staring at them. Her eyes were dark. She lifted up her arm, showing the scar.

"I can feel *him*." She started to say, calling out to the two teenagers trying to help. "Feel who?" Eleven asked, her eyes darting back to Billy who looked just as curious, maybe even scared.

"*He* likes it when I use these powers. *He* gets stronger." She continued and Billy spoke this time. "Who are you talking about?" His voice scratched with worry.

"I can sometimes hear *his* whispers, late at night. I try to tune it out

but it's getting more difficult, now I can hear *him* clearly. *He* wants me to be powerful so I can open the gate for *him*. *He* wants to use me. *He* wants to tear me apart afterwards, then you." She points a shaky finger at El who continues to look on, listening to the teenager mumble. "*He* doesn't like that there are two of us but *he's* using it to his advantage. Since *he* made me. *He* can control me. *He's* figured that out somehow." Hope's head raised again to the sky. She clutched at her arm.

"Hope, who the fuck are you talking about and what is going on?" Billy called out now, his anger getting the better of him, the feeling of annoyance taking over.

Suddenly Hope seemed to snap out of whatever trance she was in. She grabbed her arm and pressed into the scar as the pain seared. She blinked and it was gone. She looked at Billy and Eleven standing a little bit away, weirded out expressions, Billy looked annoyed.

"Where are we?" Hope called, walking back to Billy and Eleven who looked at each other, perplexed. "What do you mean? You ran out here acting like a crazy shit." Billy spoke and Hope looked at Eleven who nodded slowly but then frowned at Billy. "Crazy shit is not nice." Eleven stated and Billy grunted, frustrated. "Were you pranking us?" He asked, as he turned around to go back to the car. "What happened?" Hope asked now, a worried look appeared. She really didn't remember.

"You were freaked out and ran into the woods and now you've been rambling on about something trying to control you and they want you to open the gate. You didn't tell us who this someone was, you just kept calling it him." Billy's voice carried out into the woods as he made his way back to the edge of the forest. He turned around and noticed Hope had stopped. She was looking at her scar. "Is he speaking to you now?" Eleven asked her and Hope looked up, a frown on her face. "You said you can hear him speaking to you." She added at the confused look. Hope relaxed her face and chuckled. "You guys are making me sound crazy." Hope brushed her sleeve down and continued to walk. "All I remember was moving that bus and the taste of blood." She knowingly wiped her face with the back of her hand and blood remnants rubbed off. She could taste the metal in her mouth too.

Billy grumbled something Hope didn't hear but it didn't bother her because once they came back to the junkyard clearing, she saw Jonathan and Will with Max and Dustin. She rushed over to them. "What are you guys doing here?" Was the first thing she asked and, Jonathan looked up, heavy eyes, like he hadn't slept in a few days. "Dustin called, told us about this... what is this exactly?" Jonathan asked, looking around the junkyard. "Uh... I know I should have told you guys about El helping me out with my powers but that's what this is, practice." Hope replied, searching her jacket for a box of cigarettes. Probably fell out when she ran off into the woods. She sighed, anxiety kicking in again. "Billy, can I have a cigarette please?" She asked, batting her lashes at him and he was even more confused. "Fuck, I don't think I can deal with this." Billy mumbled now, hand through his car window, fishing out his cigarettes for her to take one. Billy thought no one had heard him but Hope did, and she was officially tired of him being like this.

She sighed, dramatic, throaty. She pulled him aside. "Look, I think you should just leave." She said, while he was lighting her cigarette. He raised an eyebrow. "You want me to leave?" He asked, stuffing the lighter into his jacket pocket. She inhaled, exhaled, and folded her arms against her chest. Her middle finger and index finger flicked the ash off to the side.

She thought about that question for a moment, then she heard the whispering. It had decided for her. She nodded. "Yes, I need positive people around me, your negativity is kind of messing with my head." Hope pulled on her cigarette and watched Billy smile. It was like he couldn't believe what she was saying, he was highly irritated but eventually agreed. Always giving up way too easily. "Fine." He opened his door. "Max." He called to his stepsister who looked up from her conversation with Dustin. "We're leaving." He got into the driver's seat and slammed the door in a huff. "What the hell, why?" Max ran over to Hope who was stubbing out the end of her cigarette on the ground. "She can stay. It's you that shouldn't be around." Max groaned when she heard Hope speak. "What did you do?" She immediately rounded on Billy who had absolutely no idea what he did. "Apparently I bring bad vibes. Will you get a ride with Byers?" He asked just as he saw Steve Harrington pull up alongside Jonathan's car. Billy rolled his eyes and started his car. "Or get a lift

with the babysitter, as long as you get home safe otherwise you come with me now.” Billy stated, shooting Max a look, his hand hitting the steering wheel, clearly agitated, annoyed or both.

“We’ll get her home.” Hope bent down lower to lean on the window, she smiled at him, eerily. Her long curls bouncing when she got back up. “Come on Max, let’s go tell Steve what happened.” Hope got back up and Max eyed Billy out as Hope walked off.

“Seriously, what did you do?” Max questioned him and Billy shrugged. “She’s fucked up, said some things in the forest. Watch her will you. If anything bad happens call me.” Billy started up the engine and drove off. Max stared back at Hope who was speaking to Steve about the practice session.